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Using the branching story approach to motivate students to read

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USING THE BRANCHING STORY APPROACH TO MOTIVATE STUDENTS TO
READ

A Thesis

Presented To

Eastern Washington University

Cheney, Washington

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree

Master of Education, Instructional Media and Technology

By

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MASTER'S THESIS

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

"Read"

"I do not know how to read"

"Read"

"I do not know how to read"

"Read"

"I do not know how to read"

This dialogue happened on the first day of Prophet's Islamic journey. The dialogue was between Prophet Mohammad and the angel Gabriel in the cave of Mount Hira. After the third time, Gabriel said, "Read, in the name of the Lord, who has created, who has created man from a clot. Read, and your Lord is the most Generous, who has taught by the pen, He has taught man that which he knew not," (al-'Alaq: 1-5).

Reading is the first duty that Prophet Mohammad had received from Allah through the angel Gabriel. In Muslim culture, it is considered our duty to read the Qur'an as well as other books so we may live a fuller life. However, some Muslims today are not voluntary readers, that is, they do not have the desire to read different books.

At a younger age, I was unmotivated to read. When I was in Saudi Arabia, I was unaccustomed to reading a lot either in public schools or at college. When I arrived in the United States, I experienced much difficulty because I was expected to read many chapters each week. Due to my lack of training in reading, studying in the United States was extremely challenging at the beginning. I soon realized that motivation was critical to

the enjoyment of reading. Thus, the question is, how do teachers motivate this generation to read? For this project, I have tried to find ways to make reading a more enjoyable experience. As a person in the technology generation, I know that combining technology with reading can help motivate younger people to read.

My personal experience has encouraged me to find technological activities that can be used to motivate children to read from an early age to overcome the difficulties of being unmotivated readers. My experience with technology has been very enriching. I have used it to communicate with classmates to benefit from their experiences, to search for resources, and to facilitate contact with instructors. Studying in the United States has meant that I have been half the world away from my family in Saudi Arabia. Technology has helped me keep in contact with them, which has allowed me to continue my studies abroad.

Significance of This Study

Clearly, reading is an important activity that influences individual lives. According to Gumus and Atlamis (2010), reading is an effective tool to develop a person's mind and imagination. It is also a means to improve writing and communication skills. Moreover, Cullinan (2000) stated that individuals read to understand what is surrounding them and get benefits of civilization's knowledge. Thomas Jefferson believed (as cited in Cullinan, 2000) that every citizen must have the ability to read and it is the public's responsibility to support the teaching of reading. Schools should begin reading instructions at early age. Ciampa (2012) confirmed that learning how to read in the first grade is a basic requirement to later academic achievements. Students who read voluntarily become good readers, achieve higher grades in all schools subjects and have

more knowledge (Krashen, 1993; Stanovich & Cunningham, 1993 as cited in Cullinan, 2000). Therefore, it is imperative that we instill in children the motivation to read.

Motivation is critical to engage children in reading. Motivated readers may read three times more than unmotivated readers (Ciampa, 2012). So, Gambrell (2011) drew a logical conclusion concerning motivation, stating the more one reads, the better reader one becomes. According to Linnenbrink and Pintrich (as cited in Petkov & Rogers, 2011), motivation enables learners to achieve academic success. If students are motivated, they will be successful in schools. To avoid reading difficulties, a first step is to enhance motivation to read at an early age (Ciampa, 2012).

Today's technology-dependent students are not motivated by the traditional instructional methods. Therefore, educators should engage 21st Century technology in the instructional process. Today's youth get many sources of information and entertainment from technological tools (Petkov & Rogers, 2011). Furthermore, the Internet can be used as a technological resource for reading. Reading could become more interesting when it is facilitated through the Internet. The Internet makes reading a playful activity and even enhances creativity if used appropriately (Ciampa, 2012).

An important strategy is to use technology to motivate this generation to read what interests them. Educators now have the responsibility to transfer reading content from traditional forms into 21st century technological ones, such as iPads, Kindles, Nooks, and other tablets. Teachers need to use 21st century technology in creative ways that encourage students to read. For example, some children are attracted to read on eBooks readers rather than traditional paper books. Educators must take advantage of this new generation's excitement with technology to promote the reading process.

While I was working on this research, I gained a lot of valuable information about why narrative reading is important. Many studies confirmed the positive effect of narrative reading on student achievement. According to Nathanson (2006), Many studies confirmed that using narratives with students in middle or secondary schools improved their interest and appreciation of some courses. In addition, using narratives in the classroom prepare students for the learning process. During my teaching experiences, I noticed that my students were more engaged in learning when I used narratives to introduce or discuss an issue. As a graduate student, I became more interested in completing the reading of a book if the book consisted of some stories relating to the content.

Applegate and Applegate (2011) confirmed that there are many studies about the impact of motivation upon students' reading interest and achievement. Motivated readers read more than unmotivated ones. This fact encouraged me to focus on a motivation as a way to encourage children to read more. Furthermore, as educators we must identify the motivational factors that help students to read. Children of this generation are called 21st century technology-dependent students. They are more likely to use 21st century technology, such as laptops and iPads, in all areas of their lives. According to Petkove and Rogers (2011), educational systems should engage 21st century technology in educating technology-dependent students. From my own experience as a teacher, students are more likely to do their assignments completely if it is related to using 21st century technology.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine how branching stories, which use 21st century technologies, can effect a student's motivation to read. Most people in Saudi Arabia do not have the desire to read beyond their religious obligations. The problem starts during their childhood when they are not encouraged to read. The notion of reading is related to the notion of studying. Children do not enjoy reading as much as using technological tools. Therefore, we need to develop a technological activity, such as branching stories, to enhance intrinsic motivation in children.

Research Questions

- What is the branching story?
- What is the branching story approach?
- How effective is the branching story approach to motivate students to read?

Possible Limitations

As a Saudi student, I need to connect my research to the real life in Saudi Arabia to gain more effective results; however, the largest limitation that may influence the quality of my research is the limited number of resources that explain the conditions in Saudi Arabia compared with other countries. Moreover, lack of technological tools in some schools in Saudi Arabia may hinder the benefits of technology integration into instruction.

Definition of Terminology

- **Motivation:** Duy and Fidan (as cited in Ulper, 2011) define motivation as inner skills that encourage people to take action to obtain their aims.

- **Branching story:** According to Riedl and Young (2006), “It is a story graph- a directed graph of nodes connected by arcs that represent user choices. Every possible path through the graph represents a story that can be told to the user” (p.3).
- **21st Century technology:** Digital technology such as laptops and iPads.
- **Narrative:** Blyer and Perkins (2004) defined narrative as a form of spoken or written communication which tells a story.
- **Self-Efficacy:** The measure of one's own ability to complete tasks and reach goals.
- **Pedagogy:** The art or profession of teaching.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Reading is critical to the improvement of both the world and individuals. It is the key to knowledge acquisition and helps people learn different skills. Reading activities enable individuals to progress from their narrow thinking into a wider world of ideas. Readers can establish relationships with authors by reading their books and forming their own ideas and thoughts. Readers can learn about different cultures in different times by reading history books. Narrative reading in particular helps us learn the stories of other people and nations, which means we learn from other's experiences.

The more people read, the more they gain and the more they are motivated to read. Children need to be motivated in order to benefit from reading. Motivation affects children's reading achievements because children become better readers the more often they read. Therefore, educators (including parents) should work hard to identify the strategies that motivate children intrinsically and extrinsically.

Today's generation of students grew up with technology. Children nowadays are interested in using technology in all areas of their lives. Reading via technology may be more appealing to motivate students. Technological devices, such as computers, laptops, and iPads should be used as motivational tools. Many researchers note that students are motivated to learn if the learning process is conducted using 21st century technologies.

This literature review consists of many studies, which represents the importance of reading and its activities. Some of these studies confirmed the necessity of narrative reading for individual students development. Many of them were reviewed to pinpoint the impact of motivation upon students' reading achievement. Others summarized the use

of 21st century technologies for reading. Additionally, studies regarding the use of branching stories as a reading activity were included to represent an effective means for motivating students. A very small number of these literature sources, mainly those in Arabic, lack publication dates.

Importance of Narrative Reading

Importance of reading activity. It is obvious that reading activities affect peoples' lives. Reading contributes to improving the individuals' minds and expanding their imagination. Reading is a tool which is used to improve students' writing and communication skills (Gumus & Atlamis, 2010). Sofsian (2006) believed that people are travelling to lands far away in their minds during their reading activities. Reading improves vocabulary and the readers' power of word. Learning how to read at an early age helps with high school achievements (Ciampa, 2012). In addition, students who are interested in reading often have higher levels of intelligence. Those students also have better creativity and academic achievement (Sofsian, 2006). Thus, it is critical to encourage children to read and read independently.

Moss and Terrell (2012) said that independent reading is an essential element of quality reading programs. Independent reading is also a good opportunity for students to practice their reading abilities. Encouraging children to read independently provides an opportunity for children to select books that they are interested in. However, reading independently does not begin as an independent effort. It is a collaborative effort among students, educators and parents. Reading is a great chance for parents to build strong emotional relations with their children (Sofsian, 2006).

The International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2012) noted that acquiring reading skills is an important achievement for individuals' lives. Young readers have more self-confidence than nonreaders. Therefore, all children must have the needed opportunity of practicing reading. Teachers, parents, and communities are responsible for helping all children learn to read. It is critical that adults understand what strategies are developmentally appropriate for their children. The development of reading continuum helps educators to understand literacy instruction and evaluate students' reading achievements to make sure that children's reading skills are improving. The goals and expectations of children's reading practices should be challenging but achievable (IRA & NAEYC, 2012).

IRA and NAEYC (2012) confirmed that good teachers depend on their reading knowledge, current studies, appropriate expectations and understanding of children's strengths and needs to build their instructional strategies. They create developmentally appropriate goals and then find the appropriate instructions which help to achieve those goals. Moreover, IRA and NAEYC (2012) asserted that children should be provided with effective reading instruction. This instruction should include daily dependent and independent reading experiences with stories and informational books. In addition, teachers themselves need professional training. They must achieve a specialized college-level education in order to recognize and apply the appropriate reading intervention. Shepard, Kagan and Wurtz (as cited in IRA & NAEYC, 2012) showed that teachers need an evaluation system to assess students' reading progress, create developmental instruction and communicate with students' parents.

Importance of narrative reading. There are many kinds of reading activities such as historical, scientific and narrative reading. Narrative reading is one of the most attractive and effective reading activity. Blyer and Perkins (2004) defined narrative as a form of spoken or written communication, which tells a story. This word, narrative, derives from the Latin word *genarare* means ‘to know’. Because of the human need to create meaning and make connections between knowledge and experience, narratives are part of ancient traditions in all cultures. According to Kelly and Zak (1999), narratives make readers part of the story world. They also help to protect the culture by retelling and exploiting a culture’s heroes against the threat of their enemies. Moreover, stories create shared meaning, beliefs, memories and visions.

Willingham (2004) believed that stories have privileged status in the learning process. Human minds deal with narratives in a different way compared with other types of discourse. There are four main advantages of narratives. Firstly, stories can be used to encourage everyone to love reading. Ash and Cullinan (as cited in Nathanson, 2006) investigated which books are preferred by children and they found that narratives (fiction) are preferred over non-fiction books. Secondly, Willingham (2004) believed that narratives are easy to comprehend because the authors can provide songs and use repetition of names, phrases and vocabulary. Grasser, Singer and Trabasso (as cited in Nathanson, 2006) found that reading stories is generally a quicker experience than non-fiction reading. Thirdly, narrative story structure facilitates making connection. Cronon (1992) defined narrative as an intrinsically teleological form, in which events can be explained by the prior events. Therefore, stories are a chain of events which lead to conflict and complications. Willingham (2004) mentioned another advantage for

narratives, which is, stories can be facilitated through on-line processing and inference-making.

Narratives, according to Jung and Riessman (as cited in Saadi, 2009), can help readers pinpoint their national identity and history. Stories contribute to delivering the whole image and the ideas of the society which people can share (Saadi, 2009).

Moreover, Bruner (as cited in Nathanson, 2006) believed that art imitates life, so stories are the means to make sense of an individual's experiences. Furthermore, research maintained that stories are critical to success in various career fields. For example, in the journalism field, narratives are critical for effective communication. Poling (2002) suggested that the narrative thread moves the story from its beginning into its end and this is important to shape good writing. He also confirmed that narratives are important for reading because of its coherence and accessibility. In the field of law and social sciences, narratives play a critical role in explicitly delivering the cases. Blyer and Perkins (1999) believed that narratives have many benefits for professional communication. Moreover, Kelly and Zak (1999) investigated the use of narratives in business communication. The result of their study indicated that narratives use both logic and emotion in an argumentative and passionate way. They believed that narratives are used by successful communicators to establish a convincing speech through subjective appeals to emotional impulses (Kelly & Zak, 1999).

Edgington (1998) conducted a study to summarize twenty years of research regarding the use of children's literature in the middle school social studies classrooms. He found that trade books (i.e., literature) bring human elements to the lesson. Children also can find themselves as the characters and develop emotions and understanding of

these characters and their time. Reading these types of books encourages children to look at the narrative and find out the similarities and difficulties with their lives. In addition, narratives build authentic details of setting, language and traditions. Kelly and Zak (1999) asserted that narratives help us associate with our own personal stories, families, cultures and societies. Eliot (as cited in Mar, Djikic & Oatley, 2008) suggested that one of the main advantage of art and literature is increasing our sympathies.

Hakemulder (2001) agreed with Eliot's idea and found 54 experimental studies, which confirmed that fictional narratives reinforce moral development and improve empathy. In a study on Dutch University students, Hakemulder (2001) answered this question: Did the effect of reading narratives occur from only fiction reading or both fiction and non-fiction reading? The students in this study read either a part of a novel about the difficulties that Algerian women faced or an essay about the problem of women in Algeria. The result showed that students who read the novel were more sympathetic toward women in Algeria and did not accept the way women were treated there (Hakemulder, 2001). Furthermore, reading narrative can influence one's character. Narratives are persuasive tools which impact values and morals that may help to change the beliefs and ideas of individuals toward the world (Mar, Djikic, & Oatley, 2008).

Gavelek and Raphael (as cited in Nathanson, 2006) proposed that narrative stories are important for two reasons: literary growth and deeper critical understanding of subject-matter knowledge. Olwell (as cited in Nathanson, 2006) found that the use of narratives in middle school social studies classes make connections between the concrete and the abstract by encouraging students to think and project themselves into the experience of the narratives. There are many studies in which teachers confirm that using

narratives with students in middle or secondary schools improved both their interest and appreciation of some courses. Kaser and Pinchback (2001) and Fredericks (2003) reported successful experiences with using literature for science and mathematics classes. These researchers demonstrated the effective role of narratives in content area classes (Nathanson, 2006).

Caine, Caine, McClintek and Klimek (as cited in Nathanson, 2006) encouraged the use of stories to prepare students to learn and motivate them to get engaged. They asserted that teachers should make efforts to bring stories that are related to everything they teach, which would help students make connections. Using storytelling is recommended to assist students in recognizing how events are related to their personal lives. Willingham (2004) stated that teachers should use narratives to help students with their long-term memory. Student can understand the strong role of the stories to promote active learning. According to Prensky (2001), narratives historically play a very important role in entertainment. In addition, using a story is an effective way to engage people by stimulating their emotions.

Fatemi (n.d.) conducted a study in Iran with 91 English as foreign language learners (EFL) at Ferdowsi University. They were randomly divided into two groups each of which received a distinct version of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The first group (A) received a fictional text and the other group (B) received an expository text; though both groups had the same reading task. The test result showed that group (A) had a better performance in developing their reading comprehension skills. The data also indicated that essays did not improve the desire to read. This means that narratives affect readers' beliefs about other people's emotions and aims. The narrative

mode helped group (A) to understand characters and casual relations of the story. This group also showed an open-minded attitude toward other's ethical problems (Fatemi, n.d.).

Narrative in Islam. Narrative in Islam is critical in its education. Yusef (2011) defined narrative in Islam as a group of ancient events which Allah (God) told in order to educate Muslims. Those narratives are about human or nonhuman creatures which demonstrate representative good or bad behaviors. The role of these characters is to motivate people to follow the good behaviors and avoid the bad ones. Aljefri (2008) stated that Islamic narrative has some unique characteristics. First of all, Islamic stories represent what the Muslim people believe to be the truth of the divinity, the universe, human beings and of life. Secondly, Islamic stories aim to instill Islamic values in Muslim children. Thirdly, the Islamic stories teach people how to build a better society. The fourth characteristic focuses on the elements of the children stories such as plot, setting, events, and characters to achieve the educational goals of the story.

Aljefri (2008) identified the main aims of the Islamic narrative. The religious goal is the first one which means instilling the Islamic beliefs in an easy and attractive way. Islamic stories also aim to teach children good ethics and values, which are performed by the characters of the story. The second aim is the intellectual goal. Islamic stories provide children with insightful information that helps them deal with their environment. The stories also improve children's imagination by transferring them to the past period and the future time to interact with the ideas, events and characters. This interaction helps children gain experience with entertainment. The third goal of the Islamic story is a linguistic goal. Islamic stories increase children's Arabic vocabulary. They also improve

children's skills of speaking and expressing their feelings fluently. In addition, children's writing skills are likely to improve when they try to write some words from the stories. Increased social skills are another benefit of reading Islamic stories. Children will be able to live within the Islamic society when they learn the Islamic values by reading these stories. The fifth goal is behavioral, because Islamic stories teach children behaviors that are appropriate in this society, such as the Islamic way of eating and drinking. In addition, stories improve children's physical movement when they try to perform the events of the story (Aljefri, 2009).

There are many resources of Islamic stories, which educate Muslims. According to Mustafeh (n.d.), Qur'anic stories are one of the means used to deliver knowledge and achieve the Islamic aims of education. Both the Qur'an and Hadith Shareef (Prophet's traditions) are used to instill faith and morals. The main goal of these stories is to teach lessons and wisdom from the past. Stories occupy one third of the holy Qur'an. These stories are either the Prophet's stories or other people's stories. There are different types of stories in the Qur'an. Stories include events from Prophet Mohammed's life, stories of different prophets and messengers, and stories of ancient nations and creations (Mustafeh, n.d.).

There are some characteristics that distinguish Qur'anic stories from other texts. First is the presence of Godliness which means; it is from God to his Prophet to be spread for human beings. Secondly, these stories are comprehensive and contain what Muslim people believe to be all knowledge for this life and life after death. Farhan (as cited in Mustafeh, n.d.) stressed that Qur'anic stories are balanced between theory and practice. The fourth characteristic is morality to establish a society of values and good morals.

Yusef (2011) confirmed that Qur'anic stories are concluded with educational lessons to either follow good deeds or avoid bad behaviors. Fifthly, stories in the Qur'an are practical. The stories deal with real life, not imagination (Mustafeh, n.d.). Moreover, Muslims believe Qur'anic stories lead to the truth of Allah's divinity. They also encourage minds to think deeply in the events of the stories. Additionally, stories in the Qur'an showcase an exceptional writing style (Yusef, 2011).

Importance of Motivation to Encourage Students to Read

There are many advantages of reading. However, many people are not interested in reading. The problem lies in their lack of motivation. Motivation is defined as the inner ability which encourages individuals to take actions that reach their aims (Duy and Fidan, cited in Ulper, 2011) (Duy and Fidan wrote theirs on in Turkish. Ulper translated it into English). Deci and Ryan (2006) stated that being motivated means being moved to perform something. Wlodkowski (as cited in Petcove and Rogers, 2011) said motivation explains behavior to achieve a goal and identifies a reason for someone's action. Gambrell (2011a) defined motivation to read as "The likelihood of engaging in reading or choosing to read" (p,5). People with high motivation to read find time to read therefore improve upon their reading skills. Alzoabi (2007) listed three main elements for motivation of learning: being aware of the important factors of the instructional situation, practicing a directed activity and maintaining that activity, and achieving the goal of learning. Lack of motivation may appear in different forms such as students' weak desire to learn or apathy for reading.

Theories of motivation. Theories of motivation discuss the "why" question of a behavior; why a person chooses to be a part of an activity or not, and what the amount of

effort he/she spends on the activity. According to Gambrell (2011a), the first theory of motivation is Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes the role of imitation and confirms self-efficacy. It is the belief that a sense of competence affects human motivation. This theory focuses on the notion that students should develop positive self-beliefs as readers. They need to be involved in reading challenges and see themselves as successful readers. The second theory is Cognitive Theory. These theorists view motivation as a process of ideas and making decisions. They believe that individuals have the ability to choose an activity and organize information to achieve their goals. Social Cognitive Theory is a combination of the previous two theories. Learners do not imitate their teacher thoughtlessly. They cognitively realize the importance of reading and writing while they follow the teacher's modeling. It also asserts the role of self-efficacy in learning. The fourth theory of motivation is the Expectancy-Value Theory. This type of motivation means the degree of student expectation to be successful in the given task and students' reorganization of the value of a process they engaged in. Lastly is Engagement Theory which distinguishes between engaged and disengaged readers and the characteristics of engaged readers (Gambrell, 2011a).

Positive effects of motivation. Linnenbrink and Pintrich (as cited in Petove & Rogers, 2011) asserted that motivation enables learners to achieve academic success. Students will be successful in their schools if they are motivated to learn. According to Applegate and Applegate (2011), there are many researchers who found that motivated readers read more than unmotivated readers, achieved higher levels in their reading classes, performed better on standardized tests of reading and had higher school grades. Deci and Ryan (as cited in Ciampa, 2012) believed that motivation is critical to engage

young students in the reading process. It is also a clear predictor of the students' future skills in reading. Students' motivation appears in their thoughts about themselves as readers and their opinion about the reading process (Ciampa, 2012). Moreover, the most important reason for high motivation to read school curriculum is that the more one reads, the better readers he/she become (Gambrell, 2011a). Lau (as cited in Ulper, 2011) found many useful ways to improve students' reading skills; however, students will not be able to benefit from these ways unless they have the drive to read. Gambrell (2011b) revealed in a sixty-four country study in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), that students who are interested in reading have better reading performance. Students who are not motivated to read have difficulties reaching their full literacy potential (Gambrell, 2011b).

Different types of motivation. Ryan and Deci (2000) indicated that people have two different level of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is the external forces that affect the individual or his/her desires to be involved in a behavior. Students acting on extrinsic motivation are engaged in reading activities for rewards like good grades or prizes. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation means that internal feelings engage an individual to a behavior. The student is intrinsically motivated if he/she finds the reading interesting (Guthrie et al., 2006; Ryan and Deci, 2000). Alzoabi (2007) defined intrinsic motivation as an internal power inside the activity that attracts the learner to practice it. This power encourages the learner to involve in the activity without any existing extrinsic support. This type of motivation may express itself as curiosity, competition, attitudes or ambition level. Deci (1992) confirmed that there are two components of intrinsic motivation. The first one is related to experiences which consist

of interests, curiosity and enjoyment in participating in a task. According to Guthrie et al. (2006), intrinsic motivation can be identified as students' curiosity to read new books for a long period of time with a high level of challenges. Students with high intrinsic motivation are more curious to read and participate in reading activities for a long time. This kind of motivation increases from a low level to a higher level. The second component is disposition which involves the students' desire to have an interaction with the activity. Many studies asserted that students with intrinsic motivation reach a higher level of performance and hold a more positive attitude in the classroom (Gambrell, 2011a). Many studies agreed that during elementary school, children's intrinsic motivation is highly correlated with reading comprehension more than extrinsic motivation. Some students like non-fiction books and others prefer fiction. Intrinsic motivation may increase when the context of the classroom gives the students the freedom to choose, collaborate and interact with the text (Guthrie et al., 2006).

Ulper (2011) conducted a study to determine factors that played a motivational role for reading according to students' point of view. The study was applied to 900 students from same-sex schools: two high schools and four primary schools. The students were asked to fill in a questionnaire about reading activities. The result showed that seven factors could affect the students' motivation for reading. 1) Teachers affected students' motivation in the primary school more than high school teachers. Teachers may affect students' motivation by giving them books as a gift. 2) Students who had a close relationship with their parents had better school performance. They also became more motivated to read. Students who were helped by their parents and lived in a caring family understood what they read more than others. Emotional factors from parents affected

their children's motivation. Moss and Terrel (2012) believed that helping children to have the desire to read is parents' main role. Mckool (2007) found in his research that parents affected their children's motivation for reading when they discussed books with them. 3) Students who had a good relationship with their friends had a higher academic motivation. Their motivation will be affected when they share books with their friends. 4) The book type was considered an effective factor of students' motivation. If the books discuss an interesting topic, those children will gain the desire to read them. 5) The design and color of the book cover affected students' motivation to read. 6) Children should have freedom to choose their books. Mckool (2007) believed that students' motivation to read will increase when they choose books they want to read. Many studies confirm that the most effective way to learn reading is "free voluntary reading," which is based on giving children the freedom to choose what they want to read. Librarians often support this concept, believing in children's own choice of book which improves children's skills of writing, spelling, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension (Krashen, Stauffer & Suzanne, 2007). In addition, Ross et al. reported that children's desire to read decreases with age. This may be a result of teaching methods that limited children's freedom to choose (Stauffer & Suzanne, 2007). 7) Environment is reviewed as a motivational factor. Saglam, Suna and Cengelci (as cited in Ulper, 2011) suggested in their research that book exhibitions affect the students' reading habits. (Saglam, Suna and Cengelci wrote in Turkish. Ulper translated it into English, 2011)

Engaging students in reading activities. There are many strategies to motivate students and engage them in reading activities. According to Gambrell (2011b), students become more likely to read when the texts are related to their lives. Deci (1992) showed

that students are more engaged in a reading activity when they build connections between the content of their reading and their real lives. Moreover, classes should be provided with books of different types, such as fiction and nonfiction stories and magazines. This can inform students that reading can be a valuable daily activity. Another strategy is providing students with enough opportunities to be involved in sustained reading. This helps students build the cognitive foundation to have the desire to read. The time students spend engaging in reading activities affect their reading achievement.

Having an opportunity to choose what and how to read is another strategy for motivating students to read. Retting and Hendricks (2000) asserted that choice is a strong force that permits students to be responsible of their own learning. According to The Press (1998), the experiment from the Pro-Active Learning Schools and Nursery director Raywyn Ramage, every child is talented and this talent can be improved if a child is offered the freedom to choose his/her preferred way of learning in a supportive environment. Those children will feel happiness with the activity whether it is an art book, a piece of music or reading if they choose to do it. When students are given the chance to choose their assignments, they are more intrinsically motivated and have better performance. In addition, research proved that learners who get more control and choice of their own reading materials are more motivated to engage in the reading activity (Ciampa, 2012).

However, Austin American Statesman (1997) asserted that the experts' suggestion to give children the freedom to choose does not mean children should completely control all aspects of their lives. Their parents should set up limits for children's choice, but allow them the acceptable choices. The opportunity to choose

promotes children's self-esteem and encourages those children to do the desired actions. Moreover, Austen American Statesman (1997) believed that giving the children the choices and being sure of their understanding of the predicted results of their choices improve their self-dependence.

Students are more motivated when they have the chance to engage in social interaction with others about what they read. Turner and Paris (1995) identified three ways of interaction. First is through peer comment interaction, which can increase a student's curiosity, observation of others' reading activities, which can increase a student's confidence of their skills, and working with others to reinforce student interest. Secondly, students become motivated when they have an experience with challenging texts with which they succeed. Thirdly, showing the value and importance of reading may motivate students to engage in reading activities.

Maxine Greer, the (co-executive) director of Freedom School said, in their school they do not teach children the act of reading but the love of reading. Greer described the two approaches used in their reading programs. The first one is the Integrated Reading Curriculum (IRC), which consists of a library that includes different books for all ages of students. The second approach is Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) where students read to themselves or their supervisors read to them. These two approaches aim to show children that reading is an enjoyable activity (Rutledge 2008).

Using Technology for Education

Recently, students of newer generations have shown increased interest in using technological tools. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and The Fred Rogers Center (FRC) (2012) defined technology tools as a broad

range of digital devices that include computers, tablets, mobile devices, cameras, DVD players, electronic games, e-book readers, etc. Those technological tools are useful for communication, collaboration and social networking. They have changed the daily lives of people, their entertainment practices, and communication with others (NAEYC & FRC, 2012). Technological tools such as cellphones, computers and the Internet are important parts of the 21st century societies. For example, American youth spend between 6-8 hours daily using the technological tools (Petkove & Rogers, 2011). Therefore, K-12 educational systems need to engage the 21st century technologies in educating the technology-dependent students of this era. Unfortunately, traditional educational methods still dominate instructional practices, which cannot get the newer generations motivated. These traditional instructional activities are one-way lectures, which are less effective. Educators should change into increasing the use of technology in the classrooms to meet students' needs for technology (Petkove & Rogers, 2011).

According to Castellani (2001), over the past few years, the tools used to promote both reading and writing instructions have changed. Some teachers have recently made efforts to integrate technology in their classrooms. Gumus and Atlamis (2011) confirmed that computers have been one of the critical parts of education and teachers have increased their use of this device in the educational process. According to Bose (2009), using information and communication technology for early childhood education leads to brain stimulation, establishes good foundation and strengthens the technology. It also develops children's cognitive skills, promotes social skills, increases creativity and improves physical ability. In addition, NAEYC and FRC (2012) confirmed that children who are familiar with technology can use technology tools to express their emotions and

ideas. They also can discover the surrounding environment and find new information.

These skills can be improved during their school years by using technology to approach different tasks such as making pictures, recording stories, producing a book and exploring new knowledge.

Gumus & Atlamis (2011) agree with the study of Luan, Fung, Nawawi and Hong (2005) confirming the advantages of using the Internet in education. The Internet helps students approach learning in different ways. Also, websites offer information in different subjects and students can share this information with friends. Students can learn new vocabulary words by using digital devices (Castellani, 2001). Moreover, the Internet enables students to read news from different countries (Gumus & Atlamis, 2011).

Children are more motivated by using new educational tools like the Internet. These tools prepare students for reading activities. Many students find this medium easier to read, plus it can cover many social and psychological needs. These new educational tools can make reading activities more creative and enjoyable (Reinking & Watkins as cited in Ciampa, 2012). Internet sites can also contain some attractive features which motivate children and enhance their desire to read. Those features can be videos, sounds, graphics, animations and other multimedia materials. Internet sites can enrich classes with supportive materials that increase authentic learning (Castellani, 2001).

The International Reading Association confirmed the importance of using technologies into the educational process (Larson, 2010). Fasimpaur (as cited in Ciampa, 2012) suggested that children consider e-books as “a new and unique medium” and they will read more when they use e-books. Ciampa (2012) found that e-books in elementary schools can affect the success of unmotivated students. Oakly and Jay (2008) mentioned

that using electronic talking books (ETBs) to encourage unmotivated readers to read gives students a measure of control not typically attainable through traditional methods. This can help motivate students to read. In fact, educators recently have started to engage technological tools in reading and writing activities. However, they need to make sure that these tools are developmentally appropriate.

Developmentally Appropriate Technology for Children

According to NAEYC and FRC (2012), some children's health organizations which are concerned with children's health issues call for the absence of interactive technology in young children's learning programs to avoid health problems such as obesity. In addition, some scientists believed that technology tools produce many negative effects. They can affect children's sleeping patterns, behaviors, academic achievements, language development and social skills. However, NAEYC and FRC (2012) stated that using technology and multimedia will support children's learning if they are used in a wise ways. Wainwright and Linebarger (2006) noted that the opponents presented the negative effects of using technology for children learning. However, recent research examined the importance of the educational content of the technology tools not the way they presented in. According to NAEYC (2009), technology tools enhance the learning process if they are used under the developmentally appropriate practices which help to achieve educational goals. Bose (2009) mentioned that the goal of Developmentally Appropriate Technology in Early Childhood (DATEC) is identifying the appropriate technological applications that promote children's development. Children need technology tools which help them to explore, create, think critically, solve problems, discover, research, express their opinions and learn from each other (NAEYC

& FRC, 2012). DATEC found that the best technological applications for early childhood education in the European countries are the ones that enhance collaboration, integration, play, and do not include violence (Bose, 2009). Hobbs (2010) asserted that educators are required to make sure of the developmentally appropriate use of technology in order to support learning.

According to NAEYC and FRC (2012), all educators are responsible for improving educational programs by integrating the developmentally appropriate technology, including multimedia, to support every child's learning. Childhood educators should have knowledge of the appropriate activities, instruction and curriculum of their students' age. Teachers who lack technological skills may choose the inappropriate tools in the learning context or use those tools in a negative way, which influences learning.

NAEYC and FRC (2012) stressed that educators should consider the family, community, linguistic norms, social groups and past experience for each child. Educators should have the ability to use their experience, skills, and knowledge of a child's interest, development, readiness and social life to decide the developmentally appropriate tools for the child. They also need to identify technology resources and effective ways to implement these for children. Thus, teachers must spend more time investigating and evaluating the technology tools that can fit with their students' needs. They also need to consistently observe their students' use of technology to identify advantages and disadvantages. Good teachers provide children with the chance to use technology tools and explore their benefits in appropriate ways in their real life.

Teachers should be motivated to learn about the new technology tools which serve children's development and learning best. In addition, teachers need to

communicate with other professionals to share the appropriate methods of preparing children for technology use. Moreover, teachers should learn how to use these tools to build communication with their students' parents. They may establish an electronic portfolio for each student which includes pictures, video or audio to share students' achievement with their parents. This increases parents' awareness of technology used in school for their children's learning and development (NAEYC & FRC, 2012).

Technology, including multimedia, can be effective when used appropriately. Those tools should be used for the activities that support the educational context. However, technology and multimedia should be integrated into the classroom activities, not replace the essential methods and activities (NAEYC & FRC, 2012). Technology tools should not decrease children's social interaction and communication with friends, parents, family members and teachers. It is critical to make sure that technology tools do not affect children's emotional and physical abilities in a negative way (NAEYC, 1994). According to Guernsey (2010) children should continue practicing physical activities, outdoor experiences, conversations and social interaction beyond practicing of technology tools to support their learning and development. Edutopia (2007) promoted that technology should be used to enhance the educators' goals and help to improve students' achievements.

Bose (2009) conducted a study to evaluate the use of technology for early childhood education, measure the e-readiness of early childhood teachers, discover the appropriate technology for early childhood programs and evaluate the application of technology in Botswana. The study was conducted on 40 in-service teachers who specialized in Early Childhood Education. The tool used in this study was a questionnaire

with both open and close-ended questions. Results showed that 92.5% of the participants chose the computer as the most appropriate technology tool for early childhood education in Botswana. It increased the students' interaction and independent learning by providing interactive and student-centered learning materials. Additionally, a computer should include active multi-media packages which made children's learning and development effective. The participants of the study (teachers) identified using the computer as a developmentally appropriate technology. The computer can be used as an easy access to effective resources, which help students build a foundation for problem solving and communication. Children can acquire the communication and interaction skills by using a computer more than using the traditional learning methods.

What Branching Story Means

Educators should use technological tools to create a motivating and interactive narrative by using branching story form. Branching stories are narratives, which have different paths that encourage the reader to interact with the plot. Riedl and Young (2006) believed that narrative is a critical part of interaction with the world. Interactive narratives tell stories in a virtual world where readers become a part of the story. There are two main types of narratives which are used for entertainment, education and training programs. The first type is linear narrative which is a traditional shape of stories where the events are narrated from the beginning to the end in a sequential way as shown in Figure 1. The user does not participate on the story. The user's role is to read the story to the end. All the users have the same story. The second type of narrative is branching narratives, as shown in Figure 2, which are often used as an interactive narrative. In this

type of narrative, the users have many story points where he/she can make decisions during the progression of the story (Riedl & Young, 2006).



Figure 2.1. A Linear Story Structure

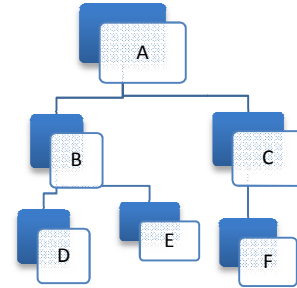


Figure 2.2. A Branching Story Structure

Goldstone (1999) identified the characteristics of non-linear stories. This type of story may not flow from the beginning to the end. The reading rhythm changes. The readers have the chance to wait at the same point and think of the event longer than usual. There are two categories of non-linear picture books. The first one has an integral intertwined narrative which consists of many stories that must be used to present it as a meaningful cohesive work. The second category contains multiple non-essential story lines. This kind consists of some insights, which are not necessary for story understanding (Goldstone, 1999).

Many interactive narratives are showed as story graphs. A branching story is used to express interactive narrative. Riedl and Young (2006) identified the branching story as follows:

A branching story structure is a story graph - directed graph of nodes connected by arcs that represent user choices. Every possible path through the graph represents a story that can be told to the user. The user's sense of control over the development of the story is limited by the number of arcs in a particular path in the branching story graph. (p.26)

According to Lai (n.d.), a branching story can be developed in different genres and in different formats such as fantasy, adventure, video game and instructional training courses. It organizes different plots that lead to the same ending. There are four main steps to follow in creating a branching story:

1. Identifying the purpose of the story: entertainment or instruction. For both kinds, the story should have a plot which includes the beginning and the end of the story.
2. Preparing a number of points from the beginning to the end of the story.
3. Creating a plot for each point and end each point with different choices, from which the readers are required to choose one.
4. Checking every path to avoid errors and making sure that every path leads to the end.

Using PowerPoint to create a branching story. There are many technological tools to create branching stories. One of the easiest and most common tools is Microsoft PowerPoint. Jones (2003) described PowerPoint as a presentation program, which was initially used widely in the business world then eventually with educational technology. Mason and Hlynka (as cited in Nouri & Shahid, 2005) addressed that PowerPoint helps to organize the content and present the lesson. It also helps to ease the note-taking process. Parks and Harrison (as cited in Jones, 2003) also asserted that using PowerPoint promotes the educational process by increasing students' motivation.

There are many reasons to encourage using PowerPoint such as: (a) promoting the teaching and learning process for students and teachers, (b) encouraging teachers to present their lesson by facilitating the process in a professional matter, and (c)

distributing the electronic file for and to students where the viewer of PowerPoint is free (Jones, 2003).

Microsoft provides a session about how to create a branching story with Microsoft Office PowerPoint on their website. These steps include:

1. Prepare the paper of storyboard to design the movement of the story. This storyboard contains every scene in the story including the plan of how scenes connect to each other.
2. Open PowerPoint program and start writing each scene in a different slide.
3. For each scene, there are some options that transfer the reader to another slide with different scene.
4. The user should use the “hyperlink” feature to activate the movement to other slides. This feature helps to add interactivity for the story (Microsoft, n.d.).

Summary

Reading is an essential activity that helps individuals to improve their literary skills. People can learn a lot in different fields by reading books from many eras and by many authors. Reading a variety of books expands human knowledge. Human minds enjoy stories for many reasons, such as increasing knowledge and expanding their imagination.

The 21st century technology generation needs to be motivated to read. Narrative reading is among the effective reading activities. Being motivated will help children get engaged in reading and in narrative reading activities. Educators must find an appealing way to connect narratives with children through using the 21st century technology

The branching story is an effective motivational means which is based on multi-media to create a narrative. The branching story consists of a story graph with some decision points. These points empower the users with an opportunity to choose and have control of story development (Riedle & Young, 2006). In addition, a branching story encourages readers to think about their choice and predict the next event of the story. Predicting what will happen next in the reading discourse successfully encourages students to read with purpose and interest (Goldstone, 1999).

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

In this chapter, I described the research method development for this study in order to examine the effect of a branching story upon students' motivation to read. I will start by addressing lack of motivation to read among the Saudi populace. The reasons that encouraged me to conduct this study were Saudis are not as interested in reading as they are in using technology tools. They do not have the desire to read beyond their religious duties. Most Saudis consider reading as a part of studying obligations. Most importantly, in this chapter, I describe the whole research designing process starting from creating the branching story to the implementation of the study in a fourth grade classroom of Saudi Arabia.

Rationale for the Research Study

Lack of motivation to read among Saudi populace. Unfortunately, reading is not a popular activity. People in Saudi Arabia are not motivated for reading beyond their religion obligation. Lack of motivation to read is a problem, which exists in all Arab countries not just Saudi Arabia. According to Alaga (n.d), most Arabs are not interested in reading. UNESCO recently reported that Arab countries have the highest percentage of illiteracy in the world. Reading activity is one of the least interesting hobbies for many people in the Arab world. Unfortunately, while individuals in European countries and America read for 200 hours a year, the average of an individual's reading time (outside the Qur'an) in Arab countries is only 6 minutes a year. Moreover, UNESCO reported that in a study of 80 Arab people, they only read one book a year (Afifi, 2012). In addition, UNESCO stated that 35,000 books are published in America and 85,000 books in Japan a year. However, only 5,000 books are published every year in the Arabic world (Alaga, n.d).

Alaga (n.d.) identified numerous reasons for the lack of motivation to read in the Arab world. The first reason is due to the educational curriculum, which focuses on memorization. Schools do not provide students with the opportunity to think, discover, and search for information. The concept of self-learning does not exist in the Arabic environment. Secondly, parents do not do a good job in encouraging their children to read from an early age. Moreover, some Arabic governments do not establish libraries to support the reading activities. These governments also do not encourage the writers to write. Additionally, the Arabs are more interested in multimedia tools than reading activities (Alaga, n.d.).

New technology in Saudi Arabia. Alhasan (2010) stated that Saudi Arabia has the fewest readers in the Arab world. However, they are the best readers in fast reading by using the new technology tools, such as social networks. They prefer to use technological tools like smartphones for fast reading on social networks. Alzubedi (2012) reported that Saudis are the biggest buyers in the world of smartphones. According to a study conducted by the UN, the average person in Saudi Arabia has 1.8 smartphones. These smartphones are always used by youth to download new technology applications. The availability of the Internet in Saudi Arabia encourages Saudis to take advantage of the smartphones applications, such as games, social networks, messaging browser and business applications. Alenzi (as cited in Alhasan, 2012) identified many reasons for the high number of buyers in Saudi Arabia. The good economic condition in Saudi Arabia enables Saudi people to purchase these devices. Secondly, there are many foreign people in Saudi Arabia who need these smartphones to communicate with their families abroad. This technology revolution in Saudi Arabia is affecting the youth's life style.

Personal experiences in Saudi Arabia. The problem starts during childhood education when children are not encouraged to read. The notion of reading is related to the notion of studying. When I was a student in primary school, secondary school or during college years, I was not accustomed to reading a lot to except preparation for exams. I was never exposed to formal reading activities during my school years as a student. In addition, through my experience as a teacher, I noticed that my students had a negative attitude toward reading. They only read to study for school subjects. Moreover, the school did not organize reading activities to encourage students to read. There were no book clubs in my school, nor was the school library an attractive task to students. Unfortunately, some schools completely ignore the use of the library. As a result, lack of reading activities in Saudi schools affects Saudi students' reading motivation.

After I received my Bachelor's degree in English language and literature, I worked as a teacher in both elementary and middle schools. I was very interested in teaching English. My teaching experience was valuable. I built a respectful relationship with my students. Although English class is not a favorite class for most Saudi students, I could motivate my students to enjoy my classes by practicing activities in English language. I encouraged them to learn from their mistakes by using English in the classroom. I also asked them to share some websites, which teach English in a simple way. Moreover, I taught my students how to use English in their social lives. I made efforts to engage my students to learn English in different ways. However, I believed that I needed to improve my skills in teaching and acquire more pedagogical knowledge to improve education in my home country.

Because of the high GPA I received while working on my Bachelor's degree, I received a scholarship to pursue a Master's degree in the United States. I was interested in learning about technology and educational theories at the same time. Therefore, I enrolled in the program for Instructional Media and Technology. During my studies, I acquired a significant amount of valuable knowledge, which may improve the educational process in Saudi Arabia. I enjoyed any conversation which represent the American schools. Many lectures and discussions showed the effective function of technology to improve students' academic achievements. Therefore, my experiences as a graduate student in The Master's program helped me formulate the final topic of my thesis. I would like to use what I have learned to help to solve the problem of lack motivation to read among Saudi student.

Being a student in American classes made me reflect upon my journey to becoming a motivated reader. I recognize the importance of motivation to take advantage of reading activities. Since I came to the graduate program in the United States, I have had to read a lot weekly for every class. Initially, this was difficult. Then, I tried to solve my problem by discovering the reason. I realized that I have lacked the motivation to read since my childhood. There was no encouragement for reading. In addition, as a member of the technology generation, I prefer to use technological tools more than any other activities. Therefore, I came up with the idea of using these tools to motivate children to read. Technology is a very broad term; therefore I chose a specific technological tool which integrates three concepts: reading, motivation and technology. After intensive reading of the literature sources, I learned that one of the appropriate strategies to motivate children to read by using technology is branching story approach.

Research Methodology

For this project, I chose the quasi-experimental design as the research method for this study. According to Bradley (n.d.), the goal of a quasi-experiment is to examine the relationship of cause and effect. It is also used to discover the result of a treatment or intervention. In a quasi-experiment design, the researcher needs to identify and design the experiment. Therefore, I adopted this method to design my own story using the branching story approach then measure its effect upon students' motivation for reading.

The branching story. Creating my branching story went through several stages. First of all, I had to consider age and gender of the readers, my target population. I chose to compose my story for students in grades 4-6 because this is the age at which of they can understand the story plot and provided options. They also should have the ability to independently choose their preferred path in the story. I composed my story for girls considering our single-sex school system in Saudi Arabia. The next decision was about the story's genre, either fictional narrative or nonfictional. Children are more attracted to fictional stories which have imaginary events. I asked many children to name stories they enjoyed and a large number mentioned Cinderella as a popular story. This led me to the decision to use Cinderella as the main character in my branching story.

Using age appropriate language for elementary school students is always something I considered. I attempted to use a clear and easy language either in Arabic or English. However, this was often difficult as one of the aims of this strategy is to improve students' vocabulary skills. This meant the story's language needed to be more formal. In addition, the options provided in the story needed to be clear and varied. This way, students would enjoy reading and choosing their preferred path of the story. These

options were arranged each with few simple words to ensure children's comprehension of the options.

I started my story where Cinderella's original story finished. I added new events in Cinderella's life after her marriage to the prince, using popular characters from the famous story thinking new events should attract children to read the new story. Students may be familiar with the original story but can be curious about what is new after the marriage. This point may motivate them to read the new story and discover what happens later to these beloved childhood characters.

Learning about human values is another important aspect during story development. The story is not used only as motivational means but also to teach children ethics such as helping poor people and contacting their family.

Participants. This study aims to take advantage of this technology revolution to increase students' motivation for reading. The participants of the study were finalized as fourth grade students in a private school of Saudi Arabia.

In fact, I did not have much flexibility to choose the subjects and the school where I could conduct the study due to technology resources availability and experiment policy of the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia. I had to choose from the list of the schools decided by the Ministry of Education. Moreover, these schools only contain female students because all schools in Saudi Arabia are segregated by gender.

I had to choose a private school which contained a computer lab. It was also important that the students were familiar with the use of technology, a task better suited for private schools because not all the public schools are equipped with a computer lab. As a result, the sample for this study included 20 female fourth graders in a private

school. During the time the study was conducted the participants were between the ages of nine and ten years old. Frequently I shared with the teacher of the class my research design and the purpose of the study. She divided the students into four groups according to her students' reading achievements and level of motivation to read. These groups were high achieving, average achieving, low achieving and highly active students. There were four students in the high achieving group (H), seven students in the average group (A), five students in the low level (L), and four highly active students (HA). The process of exploring my branching story was led by the reading teacher. As a researcher, I observed the entire experiment process while taking field notes.

Procedure. This project went through several major procedures: 1) Identifying the focus topic, 2) Identifying the right story, 3) Identifying the technology means, 4) Identifying the evaluation tools, and 4) Obtaining the approvals.

Identifying the focus topic. My study addressed the three main concepts, which are reading, motivation, and technology. I conducted intensive reading searching for related literatures to find a specific technological tool which would be appropriate to help me reach the goal of motivating students to read. The branching story approach was my final decision. A branching story can provide students with the freedom to choose the course that the story will take. There were an insufficient number of studies about the branching story approach which made it rather difficult to describe the feature of branching story approach, in a literature review.

Identifying the right story. Before composing my branching story, I read a lot of children stories and recognized the nature and the limits of imaginary events of children stories. I did not have prior training or expertise in writing children stories. I also did not

find much about how to write children stories. Online personal pages where people give advices for writing children's story such as choosing the age and gender of the readers became my help. Thus, I chose Cinderella as a main character for the story.

Next, I needed to identify the conflict of the story, which is the key to attracting readers. After that, I explored many ways to solve this conflict. In fact, I was thinking as a child of 10 years old. This helped me to come up with more events for the story. At the same time, I used my mature mind to create some valuable lessons for the young readers. I started with a flow chart for all events and options to explore the ending of the story. (See at appendix C). More than eight different paths were composed into events which are related to each other at some points. Choosing to read a path would lead students to the next one. All events chosen would take students to the same ending, which is the resolution of the story conflict. After writing the branching story in Arabic language, I translated the story into the English language. One of my American instructors helped with the English lines of the story to make sure that the level of English language is age appropriate for the elementary students.

Identifying the technology means. For this project, I used PowerPoint to create the branching story. The story includes a total of 44 slides with graphics and scripts on each slide. Hyperlinks are built into 40% of the slides that take the readers to eight different paths and/or twists of the story. The eight paths loop and are intertwined. Two buttons are provided on each of 18 slides. Students can choose to click on either button and be taken to a different path of the story development. A path contains between six and sixteen slides. A clear and easy script either in Arabic or English shows on each slide. The language of the story is formal in order to improve students' vocabulary.

Options are offered to maintain student's interest, but not offered on each slide because the purpose of this project was to promote students' desire in reading instead of playing a game. Moreover, the narrative was designed with a various length on purpose because the project was to improve students' reading skills. In addition, I focused on the format of the PowerPoint presentation. The pink color was chosen as a background because Cinderella story has a pink theme as a girls' story. Black font was used for sharp font contrast. I conducted some Internet searches, looking for images which were interesting and content and age appropriate in order to motivate children to read and promote their imagination. The feature of "rehearse timing" is also built into each slide. This helped me to record the time length a student/reader stays on each slide. The time used for reading the slides indicated the level of students' interesting in reading the branching story.

Identifying the evaluation tools. To evaluate students' motivation to read the story and comprehension for the branching story, I created comprehension questions and an ending-unit survey. There are ten comprehension questions to ask students about what they have read and what they could predict. The survey consists of nine questions regarding to identify students' opinions of their experience while reading the branching story. It also included questions about their opinion of the content of the story, and the branching story approach.

Obtaining the approvals. To implement the study in a Saudi classroom, I had to secure approvals from Saudi Arabia Cultural Mission (SACM) because they supervised me as a scholar student. First, I got a letter from my academic advisor at the university, then, I translated the letter into Arabic. The letter was emailed to the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia. They approved my application with an acceptance letter to

implement my study in one of the Saudi schools. Then, I emailed to SACM the Ministry of Education' approval letter for SACM's approval. SACM sent my request to the Ministry of Higher Education. Finally, the SACM approved my request to implement my study in Saudi Arabia.

While I was going through the procedure for the SACM's final acceptance, I worked on the application of Institutional Review Board for Human Subject Research (IRB) at EWU. This application is divided into several parts to describe the whole process of my study. The IRB asks about the nature of human subjects and participants for this study. It also requests the risk and benefits of this study to the participants. The implementation process and the branching story were all reviewed. It was approved.

Data Analyzing Plan

I planned to collect both quantitative and qualitative data during the implementation process of the study. The qualitative data included observation notes of students' behaviors, students' voice, students' questions, students' answers to my comprehension questions and students' responses to the ending-unit survey. Those data were combined with the quantitative data such as the time students spent in reading the branching the story, the number of the students who finished reading the whole branching story with all its events. Observation notes were reposted according to the four groups in which the students were categorized. Content analysis was employed to demonstrate students' completion of reading the story and interest in the story.

CHAPTER 4

Project Implementation and Data Collection

This chapter includes two sections. The first section describes implementation of the research plan, that is, how the study was carried out. The whole process of gathering the data while implementing the branching story into instruction is presented. The second section of this chapter addresses how the data was collected, including school environment, students' backgrounds, teacher's qualifications and experience, as well as qualitative and quantitative data collected in the process of implementing this research. Collected data was categorized and analyzed to reveal the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of the research design.

Implementation of the Research Study

Subject selection. I traveled to Saudi Arabia after receiving all the required approvals. I began by going to the Ministry of Education to acquire a permit letter. This letter was to inform the school that I was approved as a scholar to implement the research study in a school. Unfortunately, the first school rejected my research proposal. This showed me the difficulties in implementing an innovative idea. In contrast, the second school's principal was very interested in helping me implement the study. She believed in the benefit of technology to improve the educational process in Saudi Arabia.

This institution was a private school in Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia. It was located in a community with families at an above-average socioeconomic status. The school was equipped with necessary instructional facilities, such as a library, computer lab and science lab. They serve six grades in the school, from the first to the sixth grade with four classes for each grade. There is an average of twenty students in each class.

Most of them were Saudis and a few students came from different Arab countries. Each class had one computer with Internet access and a projector which was used to present lessons. The school provided extra curricular activities to improve student's school performance. For example, free reading activities are scheduled to encourage students to use the school's library.

Identifying the teacher and grouping the students. As addressed in Chapter Three, a teacher would lead the branching story activity. This way, the researcher could focus on observing the students and taking anecdotal notes while the students were reading the branching story. Thus, the principal helped me identify a fourth grade teacher. She was very willing to experiment with the approach of branching stories. She is a teacher with 17 years of experience. She is an Arabic language teacher and has a bachelor's degree in the Arabic language. She is also a certified teacher with two years of teacher training courses. She has a special interest in reading different kinds of books, including scientific and psychological books.

I met with the teacher and explained to her the whole process of the study. I then trained her how to use the branching story approach and how to lead the activity. The teacher and I formed her 20 students in the class into four groups. Students' level of motivation to read and their reading achievement were used as criteria to divide them into high (H), average (A), low (L), and highly active (HA) groups. There were four Hs, seven As, five Ls, and four HAs. However, due to some family special circumstances, one girl from the A level was absent in the entire process. On the first day, one of the H level students was absent. Additionally, two of the L level students were absent on the fourth

day. According to the policy of Saudi Ministry of Education, the researcher did not need a consent form from parents because the activity was an instructional practice.

Equipment securing. I checked the computer lab to make sure there were enough computers for every student. All computers had to have Microsoft Office installed and the ability to connect to the Internet. The school lab used 2003 version of Microsoft Office. The branching story was created using PowerPoint 2010. With this in mind, I had to down scale the branching story to the PowerPoint 2003 version. I installed the branching story on 21 computers, 20 computers for students and one for the teacher to present the first slide via the projector for students. Then, each computer was numbered. All the students were assigned a number. They were told to use the computer with their number on it. The students were not informed how they were assigned the numbers. For this study, numbers 1-4 were for high students; numbers 5-11 were for average students; numbers 12-16 were for low students; and numbers 17-20 were for the highly active students.

Daily activities. The entire study was planned for five days. The activity started at the beginning of the week, Saturday and continued on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. Thursdays and Fridays are weekend days in Saudi Arabia. The estimated time for the activity was 45 minutes on the first day and 40 minutes for the remaining days. The activity time was divided into 1) teacher's explaining rules, 2) students' reading time of the branching story, 3) students' time of answering the comprehension questions on the worksheet, and 4) the whole class sharing answers time.

The first day. Students took their seats in the computer lab according to the numbers they each got. Each student sat in front of a computer which had a cover page of

the branching story on the screen. The teacher started the activity by asking the students about the story of Cinderella. She encouraged the students to discuss what they knew about Cinderella. Then, she informed them that the activity would let them know more about Cinderella after marriage. Then, the teacher explained the rules of the activity.

Those rules were:

- a) Students should not start the activity without the teacher's permission.
- b) Students should choose only one option from the provided ones.
- c) Students should not go back to the previous slide after clicking the button.
- d) Students should only use the computer mouse and not use the keyboard.
- e) Students should stop reading at the end of scheduled reading time.
- f) Students should not use the computer while they answer the comprehension questions.
- g) Students would start reading on the second, third, and fourth day from where they stopped the day before.
- h) Students should tell the teacher when they reach the end of the branching story.

Then, the teacher read the first slide of the branching story, which was projected on the big screen. She asked them to get on the computer and start reading the slides one after another for 25 minutes. Twenty-five minutes later, the students were told to stop reading. The teacher handed the students a worksheet with comprehension questions and allowed students seven minutes to answer the comprehension questions. The teacher and I did not grade accuracy of the students' answers on purpose, because the goal of the practice was to improve their reading motivation. After that, students were encouraged to share their answers as a whole class for six minutes.

The second and third days. The teacher started by reinforcing the rules of the activity for students. Students then read the story for 25 minutes, answered questions for seven minutes and shared answers for six minutes.

The fourth day. The students went through the same steps of the activity as the previous two days. Additionally, at the end of the activity time, students were asked to answer the survey about their experience with the approach of branching story.

Data Collection

Observation of students. On the first day, students were excited to start reading when the teacher introduced the branching story. They asked for clarification about the rules of the activity. Most students understood how to use the provided options while reading. They chose their preferred path from the beginning. A few students needed their teacher's help to know what they should do with the provided options. One H, two A, one L, and one HA student seemed to have no interest in the activity on the first day. They were watching their classmates for the first five to ten minutes. Once they started engaging in the activity themselves, however, they began reading independently. A number of students viewed the new activity as another way to test their learning. Before they chose a button to click on, some students repeatedly asked the similar question, "Should I choose the correct answer?" "Should I click on this button?" "Is this correct?" Initially, they did not understand that the buttons were only options to give them the opportunity to choose. Some students asked questions about the meaning of some words in Arabic.

On the second day, more students looked engaged in the activity. There was less informal chatting between the students. They listened to the instruction more attentively.

They also quickly got into the quiet reading time. Their bodies leaned toward the screen indicating their level of engagement. They were more focused during their reading time. Their interaction was better than on the first day. For example, more students were willing to share their answers to the comprehension questions.

On the third day, the students showed increased motivation to read by coming to the computer lab earlier. They told their teacher that they were eager to discover more events of the story. The students showed their understanding of the branching story content through sharing answers. They were excited to tell about what they had read. Unfortunately, two of the five L students did not share their answers to the comprehension questions.

On the fourth day, all the students completely understood the instructions of the activity. They came to the computer lab and started immediately working on the story. By the end of the 25-minute reading time, the teacher and I could see a majority of the students read all slides of the story. As a result, we decided to finish the experiment this day. However, it was encouraging for me to observe the small number of students who did not finish the entire story continue reading because they were interested in knowing the ending of the story.

Students' voice. On the second day, the teacher told me that her students asked her to come to the computer lab earlier. On the third day, seven students came to the computer lab early and sat on their chairs waiting for the teacher to let them start the activity. One of the highly active students asked for different types of the story rather than Cinderella. She pretended that she had read all paths, while the timing recorder showed that she did not. She kept asking for new stories until one of the average students

said there were many different paths of this branching story. She then seemed encouraged to discover the new stories which her classmate mentioned by reading more. On the fourth day, four students asked me to start the activity earlier while they had no class. A student was telling her friend before the activity started that she tried to tell her little sister the story of Cinderella. At the end of the entire activity, some students asked for more days to read another branching story.

Reading time for each slide. PowerPoint has a feature, which called “rehearse time”. It is used to record the time a slide shows runs. This feature enabled me to track how long a students spent on each slide. This feature showed the development of student reading time. It helped the researcher be aware of each student’s reading capacity. I chose six slides to indicate the average time spent in reading each slide. Those slides were a) Slide two which included the beginning of the branching story with 64 words and two options b) Slide 12 which included 43 words to conclude the branching story c) Slide four which included 70 words, with two options d) Slide 27 which had 83 words, without options e) Slide 27 which categorized as the least number of words, 28 words, with two options f) Slide 33 which included only five words with no options.

Table 4.1. Data report on student's reading time.

Slides	Slide (2) The beginning 64 words	Slide (12) The end 43 words	Slide (4) 70 words with options	Slide (27) 83 words with no options	Slide (20) 28 words with options	Slide (33) 5 words with no options
Students						
H1	49 s	35 s	6 s	25 s	11 s	10 s
H2	51 s	35 s	50 s	92 s	25 s	46 s
H3	19 s	41 s	Not read	64 s	15 s	9 s
H4	45 s	55 s	24 s	Not read	32 s	Not read
A1	58 s	24 s	Not read	16 s	7 s	8 s
A2	58 s	24 s	19 s	24 s	10 s	16 s
A3	52 s	39 s	Not read	51 s	12 s	35 s
A4	12 s	32 s	41 s	26 s	10 s	9 s
*A6	28 s	23 s	19 s	9 s	18 s	28 s
A7	17 s	24 s	26 s	41 s	15 s	Not read
L1	76 s	107 s	Not read	75 s	41 s	Not read
L2	139 s	31 s	Not read	75 s	42 s	27 s
L3	10 s	80 s	49 s	Not read	11 s	Not read
L4	30 s	12 s	32 s	83 s	11 s	Zero
L5	80 s	55 s	121 s	60 s	33 s	40 s
HA1	16 s	42 s	Not read	52 s	5 s	8 s
HA2	63 s	78 s	126 s	24 s	36 s	38 s
HA3	21 s	3 s	7 s	14 s	4 s	6 s
HA4	8 s	28 s	19 s	4 s	21 s	15 s

*A5 did not attend the whole activity.

Students' reading time for those six slides can be divided into three different levels: long, average and short. The long time used indicated that students had difficulty in reading skills and comprehension if their answers are not accurate. The average time used showed that students' were interested to read the branching story. The short time

used addressed that students either did not read or read fast. Their comprehension answers indicated their lack reading or fast reading.

Four students (two HAs, one A, one L) took longer than 60 seconds for reading Slide 2, which included 64 words. Six students (one H, two A, one L, two HAs) spent shorter than 20 seconds. The remaining students spent between 30-50 seconds to read the second slides which include the beginning of the branching story. (Figure 4.1)

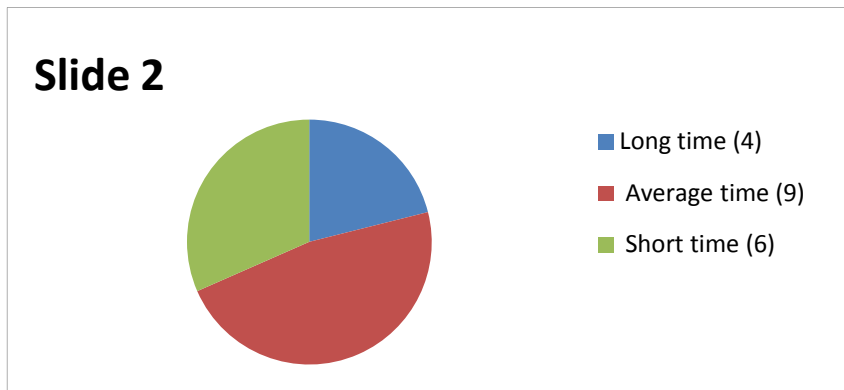


Figure 4.1. Students' reading time for slide 2

Three students (two Ls, one HA) spent more than 70 seconds to read Slide 12, which included 43 words. Two students (one L, one HA) spent shorter than 13 seconds on it. The remaining students spent 20-50 seconds to read it which concluded the branching story. (Figure. 4.2)

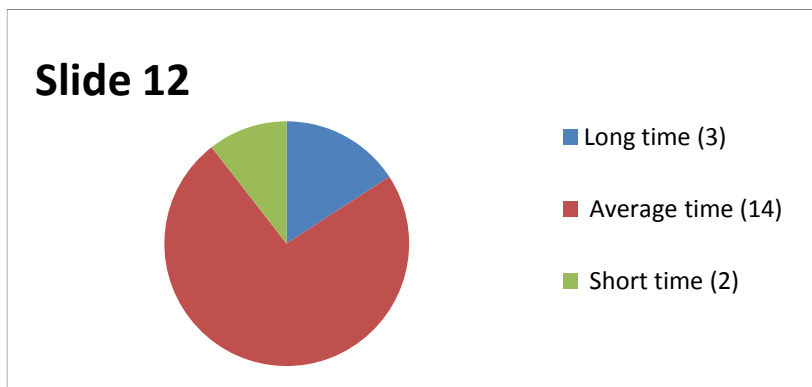


Figure 4.2. Students' reading time for Slide 12

For reading Slide 4, which included 70 words with two options, two students (one L, two HAs) spent more than 120 seconds reading the slide. Five students (one H, two As, two HAs) took shorter than 20 seconds. The remaining students took from 20 to 50 seconds to read the fourth slide. (Figure 4.3)

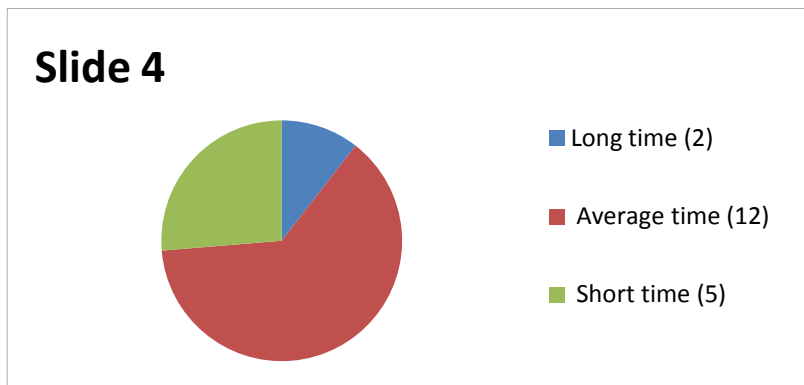


Figure 4.3. Students; reading time for Slide 4

Four students (one H, three Ls) took more than 70 seconds to read slide number 27, which included 83 words with no options. Four students (two A, two HAs) spent shorter than 20 seconds. The remaining students took 30-60 seconds on reading this slide. (Figure 4.4)

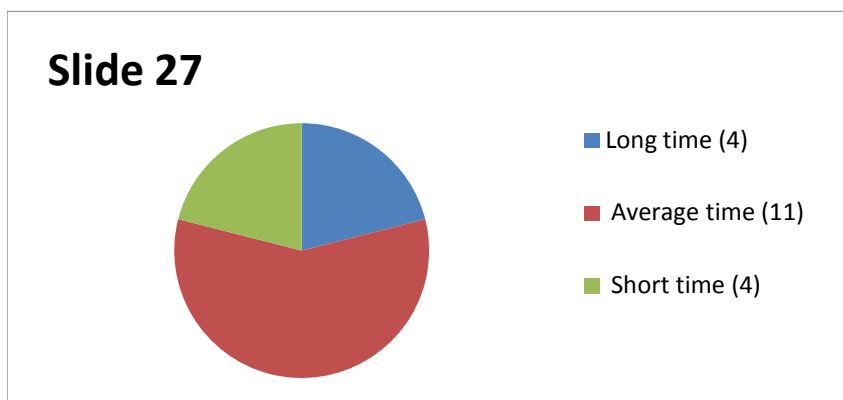


Figure 4.4. Students' reading time for Slide 27

Two L students spent longer than 40 seconds to read 28 words in Slide 20, which had two options. Three students (one A, two HAs) spent shorter than 8 seconds to read

Slide 20. The remaining students used 13-30 seconds to finish reading the slide. (Figure 4.5)

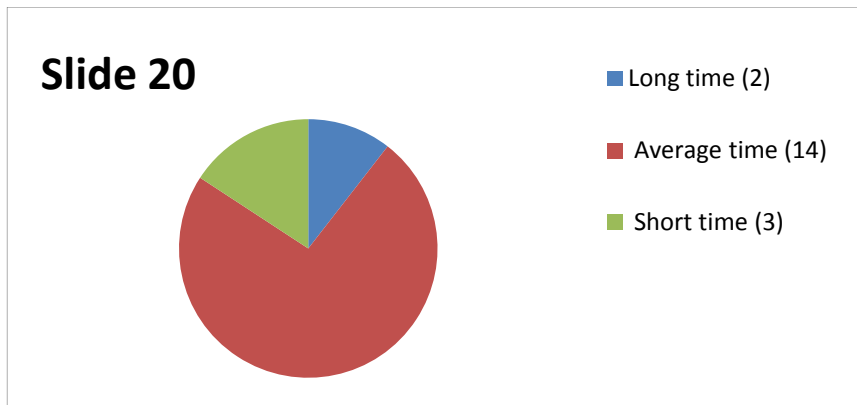


Figure 4.5. Students' reading time for Slide 20

For reading Slide 33, which included 5 words with no options, four students (one H, one A, one L, one HA) spent more than 35 seconds. Four students (one A, one L, two HAs) spent shorter than 8 seconds. The remaining students spent an average time between 10-30 seconds. (Figure 4.6)

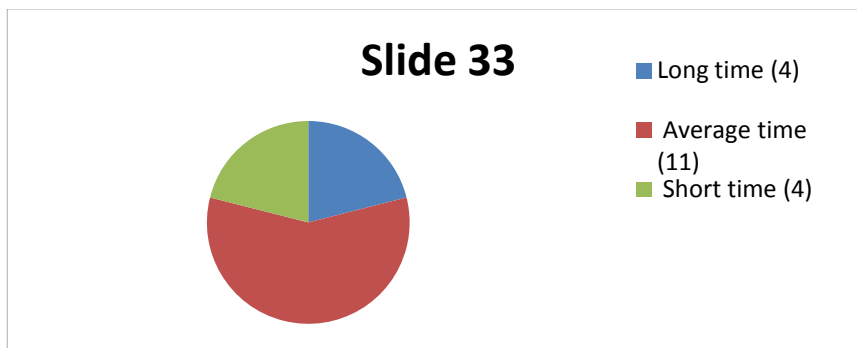


Figure 4. 6. Students' reading time for Slide 33

Examining the students reading time of the whole six chosen slides, I could see that a higher number of low students (L) and highly active student (HA) needed a longer time to read the slides. The average time length indicated the majority of students' time need (Figure 4.7). The instructional implications of this will be discussed in Chapter 5.

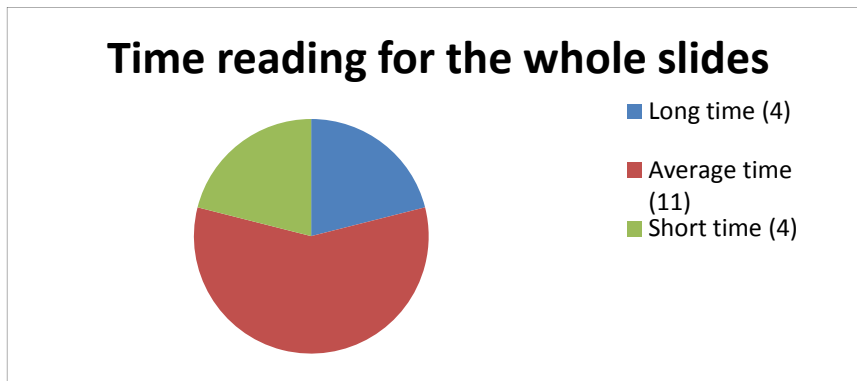


Figure 4.7. Time reading for the whole slides

Students' answers to the comprehension questions. I used comprehension questions in order to assess students' understanding of the branching story. Students' answers showed their comprehension level of the branching story. Students from different groups demonstrated different levels of understanding. Students' answers with a large number of words and descriptive sentences showed high level of comprehension.

Table 4. 2. Data Report on Students' comprehension answers

Student	Number of Words	Number of Sentences	Descriptive answers	Generic answers
H1	41	5	2	8
H2	41	8	4	6
H3	37	6	3	7
H4	40	4	3	5
A1	32	6	3	7
A2	74	9	7	1
A3	17	4	1	9
A4	36	7	2	8
*A6	40	7	2	8
A7	71	12	6	4
L1	16	3	2	5
L2	4	1	1	6
L3	30	4	4	1
L4	25	6	4	3
L5	43	9	4	6
HA1	61	9	3	7
HA2	63	10	8	2
HA3	57	9	6	4
HA4	74	9	5	5

*A5 did not attend the whole activity.

Nineteen students' answers can be divided into three levels high (6), average (10) and low (3) as shown in Table 4.2. The answers by all the four HA and two A students

belonged to the high level. They wrote more than 55 words in total. They also wrote more than 10 sentences. All except one are most descriptive.

Two L and one A students' answers should be categorized as "low". They wrote the least number of words for the comprehension questions. They gave more generic answers than descriptive ones.

The answers of the remaining ten students 4 Hs, 3 As, and 3 Ls could be categorized as "average". The average number of words to answer the comprehension questions was 38 words. The number of descriptive answers was about three sentences from each student.

Result of unit-end survey questions. The students responded to the nine questions on the unit-end survey at the end of the entire project as shown in Table 4.3. The responses indicated the students' motivation and interest level for reading. The first question asked about students' experience of reading the branching story. One hundred percent of H students (four out of four), eighty-three percent of A students (five out of six), one hundred percent of L students (3 out of three), and seventy-five percent of HA students (three out of four) viewed their experience as an excellent one.

The second question asked the students if they liked the story of Cinderella Wants a Son. One hundred percent of H students (four out of four), eighty-three percent of A students (five out of six), one hundred percent of L students (three out of three), and seventy-five percent of HA students (three out of four) answered, "yes".

The third question was about clarity of the reading activity's instructions. Three out of four of H students, four out of six of A students, two out of three of L students, and

three out of four of HA students thought the instructions were clear and easy to understand.

When students were asked if they needed more time to read the branching story, two of H students, one of A students, two of L students, and three of HA students answered with “yes”.

In response to the fifth question about the difficulty level of the comprehension questions, all of the four H students, three of A students, two of L students and three of HA students found the comprehension questions easy. The remaining students of all categories identified the question difficulty level as an average. There were no students who viewed the questions as being too difficult.

The sixth question was about the options provided in the story. All of the four H and three L students, three of A students, and three of HA students like the options in the story.

When students were asked if they liked to read the story of “Cinderella Wants a Son” on computer or using printed books all students but two preferred a computer to a printed book. Between the other two, one did not give any response.

The eighth question was about students’ desire to read more stories by using the branching story approach. All the four of H, L, HA students answered with “yes”. Four A students also chose “yes”, but two of A students did not want to use the branching story approach to read different stories.

Among 17 valid responses, 14 liked the graphics, two responded with “not too much”, and one did not like the graphics of the branching story.

Table 4.3. Result of Unit-end Survey Questions

	Survey Questions	Answers	High (4)	Average (6)	Low (3)	Highly Active (4)
1	How was your experience with the activity of the branching story?	Excellent	100% (4)	83.3% (5)	100% (3)	75% (3)
		Good	0%	0%	0%	0%
		Weak	0%	16.6% (1)	0%	25% (1)
2	Do you like the story of Cinderella (I want a child)?	Yes	100% (4)	83.3% (5)	100% (3)	75% (3)
		No	0%	16.6% (1)	0%	25% (1)
3	Were the instructions of reading the branching story clear?	Yes	75% (3)	66.6% (4)	66.6% (2)	75% (3)
		not too much	25% (1)	16.6% (1)	33.3% (1)	25% (1)
		No	0%	16.6% (1)	0%	0%
4	Did you need more time to read more slides?	Yes	50% (2)	16.6% (1)	66.6% (2)	75% (3)
		No	50% (2)	83.3% (5)	33.3% (1)	25% (1)
5	How were the questions about the story?	Easy	100% (4)	50% (3)	66.6% (2)	75% (3)
		Average	0%	50% (3)	33.3% (1)	25% (1)
		Difficult	0%	0%	0%	0%
6	Were you interested with the options of the story?	Yes	100% (4)	50% (3)	100% (3)	75% (3)
		Not too much	0%	50% (3)	0%	25% (1)
		No	0%	0%	0%	0%
7	How do you prefer to read Cinderella (I want a child)?	By Computer	100% (4)	66.6% (4)	100% (3)	100% (4)
		In a paper book	0%	16.6 (1)	0%	0%
8	Do you want to have the same activity with different stories?	Yes	100% (4)	66.6% (4)	100% (3)	100% (4)
		No	0%	33.3% (2)	0%	0%
9	Do you like the pictures in the story?	Yes	100% (4)	66.6% (4)	100% (3)	75% (3)
		not too much	0%	16.6% (1)	0%	25% (1)
		No	0%	16.6% (1)	0%	0%

Findings

The purpose of this study was to experiment with the branching story as an instructional project using 21st century technology and to study how effective the branching story could be to motivate children to read. In fact, the collected data showed a positive effect of the branching story approach as a curriculum project to motivate students to read. The students' behaviors during the activity of reading the branching story indicated that they were more engaged with the approach as the days progressed. There was less informal chatting between students day after day. They settled quickly into the quiet reading time. Students' body language showed their focus on the computer screen. In addition, students were more willing to share with the class their answers to the comprehension questions. They were interested in telling about what they had read. By the end of the fourth day, the small number of the students who could not finish reading the entire branching story kept reading to discover the end of the story. The students asked their teacher to come to the computer lab earlier to start reading. They also asked for more days to read different stories by using the branching story approach.

The feature of "rehearse time" showed that more and more students spent a longer time in reading the content with the days progressing decreased. In the beginning, some students just clicked on the option buttons to move between the slides out of curiosity. The time when they stayed on each slide increased. This may imply their motivation to read increased.

To the teacher's and my surprise, three HA students spent a relatively short time in reading the branching story. Their answers to the comprehension questions were at a high level with a larger number of descriptive sentences than their peers of other groups

did. This confirmed their understanding of the branching story. Their teacher grouped them as highly active students because she had difficulty in attracting them to an activity. She also found it hard to maintain their attention for a longer time during the whole class time. The branching story offered them the opportunity to do some hands-on actions during the reading time. They could read, think of the options, use the technology, click on the buttons, answer the questions, and share the answers.

The students' answers to the unit-end survey question revealed that 15 out of 17 students viewed their experience with the branching story approach being excellent. They also showed their desire to read more stories by using the branching story approach. Fifteen students preferred computer to a printed book to read a story. Also, 13 students liked the options of the branching story.

CHAPTER 5

Discussions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to experiment with using a branching story as an instructional approach and to study how effective the branching story approach could be to motivate children to read. Beyond their religious duties to read, many people in Saudi Arabia do not have the desire for reading. Therefore, it is necessary to work on increasing Saudi students' motivation to read, starting from childhood. This new generation of students is growing up with the 21st century technology. They are interested in using technology in all aspects of their lives, including learning in school. Therefore, teachers must make efforts to integrate technology into their reading instruction (Castellani, 2001).

This project started with three research questions. The first research question was about defining a branching story. The second question was about the meaning of the branching story approach. The third question was to test and answer the crucial question: How effective is the branching story approach to motivate students to read?

Research question 1: What is a Branching Story?

According to literature (Riedl & Young, 2006), the branching story was structured from a narrative mediation tree. Like tree branches, the story branches offer a number of possible paths throughout the story and there is a plot for each path. The branches enable the readers to choose a path based on their interests, which create interaction between the story and the reader. There are many story points where the readers need to make a decision regarding the plot. The branching story can be developed in different genres and in different formats such as fantasy, adventure, video game and instructional training courses. It organizes different plots that lead to the same ending (Lai, n.d.).

The multimedia features of the PowerPoint were used to develop the branching story for this project. The story includes 44 slides in total with graphics and scripts on each. Hyperlinks are built into 40% of the slides that take the readers to eight different paths and/or twists of the story. The eight paths loop and are intertwined. Two buttons as options are provided on each of 18 slides. Students can choose to click on either button and be taken to a different path of the story development. A path contains between six and sixteen slides. Options are offered to maintain students' interest, but not offered on each slide because the purpose of this project was to promote students' desire in reading instead of playing a game.

Research question 2: What is the Approach of Branching Story?

Using a branching story approach into reading instruction in Saudi Arabia is quite a challenge to traditional reading instruction. The regular reading instruction in Saudi Arabia includes two parts. The first part focuses on reading comprehension and the second part stresses accurate pronunciation of words. During the comprehension session, the teacher let students read silently and then processes the text with a whole class discussion. Students are expected to provide the definite right or wrong answers to the teacher's questions. Printed books are the sole reading sources. Students do not have any control of what they are reading. There is little consideration about students' motivation to read. According to Renwick (2013), students have had access to printed books for years in their school library. But these books have not increased their interest in reading. Currently, students are more engaged with technology and media than with printed materials. Therefore, their motivation for reading can improve when the school speaks

students' language by changing the format of the books into an interactive technology medium (Renwick, 2013).

The branching story approach in this project aimed to shift the story delivery means from the linear printed storybook into the interactive technology tool. The project was carried out in an after-school program for reading instruction. The teacher used the computer lab where each student had her own computer with the branching story in it. The approach of branching story consisted of several components: explanation of the project rules, students' reading time, students' answering comprehension questions individually on the worksheet, and whole class sharing time.

The unique aspect of a branching story is the options students can choose. Those options provided the students with the opportunity to interact with the story by choosing their own preferred options. The hyperlink feature enabled the students to read which path they wished. This way, students feel empowered by gaining the feeling of control with their interest. How to use the options was a learning process for many students. The Saudi students were used to being right or wrong during the reading instructions, and therefore, it took the students a while to understand their own right as a decision maker in the reading activity.

Another aspect of the branching story approach was the story sharing time. After the silent reading time, students were asked to answer the comprehension questions to demonstrate their understanding of the story. Then they were to share with their classmates what they had read. The teacher did not offer any judgmental feedback for each response. And the students' responses were different from each other because they each read different path each day. The discussion was for students to share their

understanding with the peers and also functioned to be motivational. Sharing different answers encouraged the other students to predict the ending of the story and become more interest in getting the new paths that their classmates had read before.

Research Question 3: How effective is the branching story approach to motivate students to read?

The branching story approach proved to be an effective motivational tool in this study. This approach provided the reader with opportunities to choose paths and control their reading. In addition, the branching story approach motivated the readers to think about their choices and predict the endings of the story. Successfully predicting what will happen next in the text encourages students to read with purpose and interest (Goldstone, 1999).

To my delight, this project accomplished its original goals to a great extent. The effectiveness can be addressed in three main aspects: 1) students' motivation, 2) more serious reading among students, and 3) engaging kinesthetic learners.

Students' motivation. The entire process of integrating the branching story approach into reading program demonstrated its positive effect in motivating students for reading. There could be the Hawthorne effect since the students knew it was an experimental activity. However, the students expressed their desire to read the branching story by coming to the computer lab earlier after the first day. They also asked for other days to read more branching stories. By the end of the fourth day, the small number of the students who did not finish reading the whole branching story kept reading and wanted to know the end of the story.

The students were observed as more willing to share their answers to the comprehension questions. They were interested in informing their classmates about what they had read due to the different path they each chose.

Serious reading. It was apparent to me that the students became more serious about reading day after day. The students' behaviors during the silent reading time indicated that they were more engaged on the following three days compared to the first day. Informal chatting between students decreased on the three subsequent days. The students listened to the instructions with more attention. More importantly, the students engaged quickly into the quiet reading time by focusing more on the computer screens.

Reviewing the "rehearse time" when the students used in reading each slide showed the students' increased focus on reading. In the beginning, some students were clicking on the option buttons to explore other slides because of curiosity. By the end, the time they spent on each slide became longer. The students' answers to the comprehension questions mirrored the result of their serious reading: better understanding. Their answers improved each day with more accurate and descriptive details.

The whole class sharing time is a vital component of the branching story approach in reading. It is time for students to develop their verbal communication skills and to demonstrate their comprehension and analytical skills. It also allows for teachers to check on the students' understanding of the story. The teacher and I were surprised with students' enthusiasm to share their answers. According to the teacher, the students' participation level was much higher than their performance in the conventional reading activities. Some students answered with a high level of comprehension and thinking skills and with vocabulary more mature than their age. The students' willingness to share and

active participation in sharing their answers with their classmates during the whole-class sharing time was another surprise to the teacher. Interacting with the story, making their own options for different paths, and using narrative writing to express their own comprehension of the story activated the students' minds. Their passion for reading, positive attitude toward sharing their understanding, and improved behaviors all manifested the effective results of the approach.

Engaging kinesthetic learners. The whole class of students was divided into groups based on their reading achievements and learning behaviors prior to this project. Special attention was given to the four highly active students. Their teacher grouped them together because she had difficulty in keeping them focused on an activity. Sustaining their attention for long during the whole class time was a challenge for the teacher. To the teacher's great surprise, none of the four students demonstrated any behavior problems in the four days. On the contrary, they performed amazingly well in being focused and providing great answers to the comprehension questions. Three of them had the cognitive skills to understand the story in a short time and provide the descriptive answers to the comprehension questions. Even the other HA student who spent a longer time in reading the story provided very accurate responses. All this confirmed their understanding of the story.

Hutton (2007) identified the kinesthetic learners as students who learn differently by doing and touching in order to have better understanding. They enjoy touching things and taking part in physical activities. They are always interested in trying new things. There are some strategies which enable kinesthetic students to learn better using computers. This study has confirmed Hutton's statement. The changes in the HA students

behavior urge educators to use differentiated instruction to promote all students' interest in learning. The kinesthetic learners experiences in this study suggest educators can transform traditional instructional strategies to bring all the students' potential into full play.

The review of literature in this study emphasizes the importance and necessity of developmentally appropriate technology for instructional purposes. NAEYC (2009) confirmed the importance of using technology tools under the developmentally appropriate practices to manifest the educational process and achieve its goals. Use of technological tools at an early age can improve students' cognitive skills such as creating, exploring, discovering, solving problems, and thinking critically (NAEYC & FRC, 2012). This project was an experiment as a learning opportunity for both students, their teacher and me.

I was an elementary school teacher before coming to the United States to pursue an advanced degree. I witnessed students' struggle with traditional methods. They had difficulties becoming interested in the learning process until they were offered to use technology by visiting learning websites. With this generation of the 21st century, traditional methods did not get the students involved into an effective learning. Integrating technology tools into the learning process was evident in promoting students' motivation in learning and also better performance academically and socially.

It is important to point out that adoption of technology into reading instruction will not totally replace the traditional methods. It should be a part of the entire pedagogy. Teachers need to have knowledge and proficiency to employ all kinds of teaching strategies that it takes to meet all students' needs. Teachers have to consider students'

cognitive and effective level. Using technology tools should be age appropriate and match students' skills and abilities. Using complicated technology tools with early age students will not improve the student's achievements, but may hinder the benefits of using technology. Students at different ages have different types of interests. Thus, the technology chosen should be compatible with their interests and needs. Kinesthetic learners can be more interested to use technology tools, which enable them to physically become active, interacting with the devices. Additionally, the technology tools have to be gender appropriate. For this project, I used the story of Cinderella, since it is recognized by Saudi girls as a favorable character. The color of pink was used as a background. However, I have realized that more branching stories should be developed to broaden Saudi young females students' cultural and social perspective.

Recommendations for the Future Application

This project provides evidence of the positive effects of the branching story approach in motivating students for reading. Thus, it is recommended to integrate this approach in a wider scope in Arabic reading instruction.

- 1) More branching stories should be developed for instructional purpose and also for students' use. Stories from the printed books can be transformed into multi-media branching format. Educators, story writers, even students should be encouraged to design branching stories as much as possible.
- 2) My own experience of designing the branching story indicated teachers can all make efforts to come out with own their editions of the branching stories. It takes time and some expertise to do so. Thus teaches can work collaboratively to design stories instead of waiting for the stories to come to them.

3) In order to reach all kinds of learners, the need to integrate updated technology into the regular reading instruction is obvious. Branching stories are just one kind of technology. Internet and social media can also be used in reading instruction to enable students to read different kinds of books online. E-book applications offer a valuable opportunity to use technology for reading activity.

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Appendix A


Sample of the Branching Story in English

CINDERELLA

WANTS A CHILD

Created By: Hanan Aldurayb





Cinderella lived with her husband, the Prince, in great happiness. After seven years, she became unwelcome at the Royal Palace because she did not give birth to the king's grandson. The Queen summoned her son and told him that Cinderella must give birth to children who would keep on the property of the royal family, or he should divorce her. The Prince kept silent and then

The prince went to Cinderella to talk to her about the matter

The prince refused to discuss this matter


The Prince went with Cinderella to the doctor. The doctor told them that Cinderella had a problem and would not have a child. There was one cure, however, that was a plant growing at the top of the mountain after the end of the winter because it plumped rainwater.

Cinderella cried and felt sad because winter was still far away.

The prince promised Cinderella to keep their secret until they found a solution

The prince returned to the palace with Cinderella and went to tell the queen what the doctor said





Cinderella was watering the flowers on the balcony when her prince came to tell her that the Queen refused to wait more than a month. When the Prince left, Cinderella sat on the silky rug on the floor crying next to her lovely cat. Slowly she fell asleep.

Suddenly Cinderella felt a caring hand wiping her tears away. When she opened her eyes, a kind old woman was smiling at her and she became happy.


Next

The Prince told the Queen how difficult it would be to receive a treatment before the end of next winter. The Queen refused to wait because the king wanted grandchildren as soon as possible.

The Prince must find a solution within a month from today or else he would be forced to divorce Cinderella.

The prince hid the queen's decision and didn't tell Cinderella


The prince went to Cinderella and told her what the Queen said



The kind old woman converted the silky rug to a Flying Carpet. She also found a cat and converted him into a man to serve Cinderella in the journey towards the mountain. She told them about the plant. She said to the cat, "Go with Cinderella to the dark cave on the top of the mountain to get the plant and the forest where the great river is."

Then she said to Cinderella, "Listen, O my daughter, you will find the plant in the cave, but you have to mix it with Great River water and drink it".

Next



Appendix B

Sample of the Branching Story in Arabic



سندريلا
أريد طفلاً



عاشت سندريلا مع زوجها الأمير في سعادة بالغيم ولكن بعد مرور سبع سنوات أصبحت سندريلا هير مرحب بها في القصر الملكي لأنها لم تنجب للملك حفيد يرث الملك استعنت الملكة ابنها الأمير والخبرته ان سندريلا يجب ان تنجب له طفلاً يحافظ على املاك العائلة الملكية والا عليه ان يطلقها....سكت الأمير ثم

خرج الأمير لبحث مع سندريلا عن هذا الأمير

رفض الأمير مقابلة تلك الأمير

ذهب الأمير مع سندريلا الى الطبيب فأخبرهم الطبيب ان سندريلا لديها مشكلة ولن يكون لديها طفل الا بعلاج واحد وهو نبتة تنمو في اعلى الجبل بعد نهاية الشتاء لأنها تتروي بمياه الأمطار

بكت سندريلا واحست بالحزن لأن فصل الشتاء لايزال بعيدا



عاد الأمير الى القسم برغبة سندريلا وأجاب الأمير الملكة بعد ذلك الطبيب

بعد الأمير سندريلا بأنه ان يخرج الأمير من القصر بعد الفصل

كانت سندريلا تسقى الأزهار في الشرفة و جاءها الأمير ليخبرها ان الملكة رفضت الانتظار أكثر من شهر وحينما ذهب الأمير خارجا جلست سندريلا على البساط الحريري في ارض الشرفة واصبحت تبكي بكل براءة حتى عليها النوم

فجأة احست سندريلا بيد حانية تمسح دموعها وحينما فتحت عينيها كانت الحجوز الطيبة تنقسم لسندريلا

استيقظت سندريلا وهي لا تصدق ماترى من شدة السعادة

تتلى

اخبر الأمير والدته الملكة عن صعوبة احضار العلاج قبل نهاية فصل الشتاء القادم فرفضت الانتظار وقالت ان تلك النبتة قد لا تكون موجوده في اعلى الجبل والملك يريد حفيدا بأسرع وقت ولكن عليك ان تجد حلاً خلال شهر من اليوم والا ستطلق سندريلا



ذهب الأمير مع سندريلا وهو حزين لفهمه انهم سندريلا بعد فصل الشتاء

كان الأمير قد قرر ان يذهب الأمير والأمير إلى القصر

قامت الحجوز الطيبة بتحويل البساط الحريري الى بساط طائر ونظرت الى القط وجولته الى رجل خادم لسندريلا في رحلتها نحو الجبل ودلتهم على مكان النبتة العظيمة وقالت للقط :

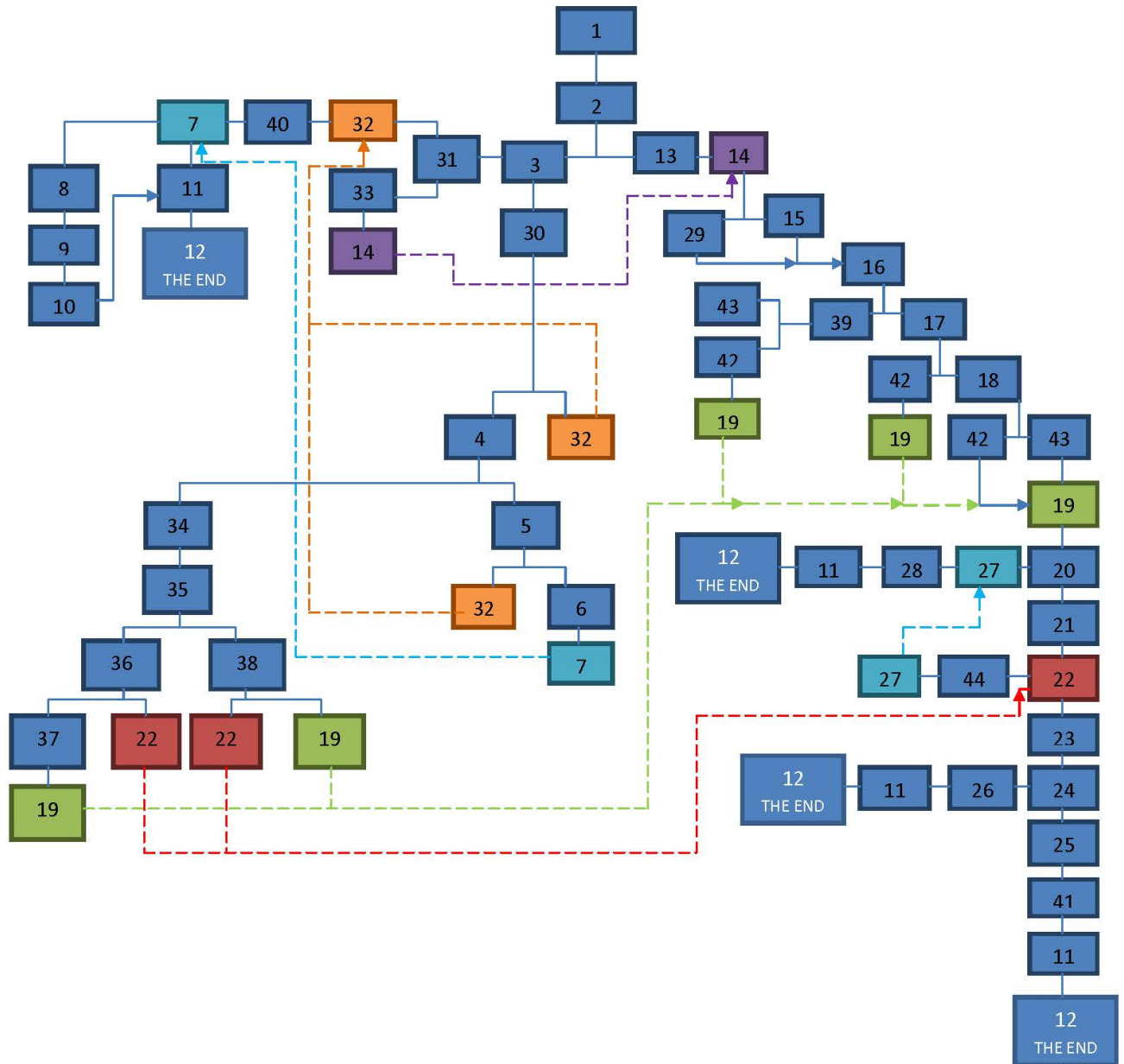
ايها الخادم اذهب بسندريلا الى الكهف المظلم في اعلى الجبل لاحضار النبتة ثم عودا الى وسط الغابة حيث النهر العظيم

و قالت لسندريلا: اسمعي يا ابنتي ستجدين النبتة في ذلك الكهف ولكن عليك ان تخطيها بماء النهر العظيم وتشر بيها

تتلى



The Map



Appendix D

Comprehension Questions

- 1- Where was Cinderella?
- 2- What was she doing?
- 3- What do you think she will do?
- 4- Who did Cinderella meet?
- 5- Who do you think Cinderella will meet?
- 6- Did Cinderella find the treatment of pregnancy? If yes how?
- 7- Do you think Cinderella will find the treatment of pregnancy? If yes, how?
- 8- What do you think it will happen for Cinderella at the end?
- 9- Was your prediction the same as the story ending?
- 10- Who did you like from the characters of the story and why do you like her/him?

Appendix E

Arabic Comprehension Questions

- 1- أين كانت سندريلا؟
- 2- ماذا كانت تفعل؟
- 3- ماذا تعتقد انها سوف تفعل؟
- 4- بمن التقت سندريلا؟
- 5- باعتقادك من هو الشخص الذي تظن ان سندريلا سوف تقابله؟
- 6- هل وجدت سندريلا العلاج لمشكلة الحمل؟ ان كانت الاجابة بنعم, كيف؟
- 7- هل تعتقد ان سندريلا سوف تجد العلاج لمشكلة الحمل؟ ان كانت الإجابة بنعم, كيف؟
- 8- باعتقادك ماذا سوف يحدث لسندريلا في النهاية؟
- 9- هل وافق توقعك نهاية القصة؟
- 10- اي الشخصيات اعجبك اكثر ولماذا؟

Appendix F

The Branching Story Approach Survey

- 1- How was your experience with the activity of the branching story?
 - a- Excellent
 - b- Good
 - c- Weak
- 2- Do you like the story of Cinderella (I want a son)?
 - a- Yes
 - b- No
- 3- Was the instruction of reading the branching story clear?
 - a- Yes
 - b- Not too much
 - c- No
- 4- Did you need more time to read the slides?
 - a- Yes
 - b- No
- 5- What was the difficulty level of the questions about the story?
 - a- Easy
 - b- Average
 - c- Difficult
- 6- Did you like the options of the story?
 - a- Yes
 - b- Not too much
 - c- No
- 7- How do you prefer to read Cinderella (I want a son)?
 - a- In a paper book
 - b- On a computer
- 8- Do you want to read more stories through branching story approach?
 - a- Yes
 - b- No
- 9- Do you like the pictures in the story?
 - a- Yes
 - b- Not too much
 - c- No

Appendix G

Arabic Survey

- 1- كيف كانت تجربتك اثناء نشاط القصة المتفرعة ؟
 أ- ممتاز
 ب- جيد
 ج- ضعيف
- 2- هل اعجبتك قصة سندريلا اريد طفلاً؟
 أ - نعم
 ب - لا
- 3- هل كانت التعليمات لاستخدام القصة المتفرعة واضحة؟
 أ - نعم
 ب - ليس دائماً
 ج - لا
- 4- هل تحتاجين وقت اكثر لقراءة الشرائح ؟
 أ - نعم
 ب - لا
- 5- كيف كان مستوى صعوبة الاسئلة عن القصة؟
 أ- سهل
 ب- متوسط
 ج- صعب
- 6- هل اعجبتك الخيارات في القصة؟
 أ- نعم
 ب- ليس كثيراً
 ج- لا
- 7- كيف تفضل قراءة قصة سندريلا اريد طفلاً ؟
 أ- في كتاب ورقي
 ب- باستخدام الكمبيوتر
- 8- هل تريدان قراءة قصص اخرى باستخدام طريقة القصة المتفرعة؟
 أ- نعم
 ب- لا
- 9- هل اعجبتك الصور في القصة؟
 أ- نعم
 ب- ليس كثيراً
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Appendix H

IRB Approval



Eastern Washington University

at Cheney and Spokane

MEMORANDUM

To: Hanan Aldurayb, Department of Education, 312 WLM

From: Sarah A.C. Keller, Chair, Institutional Review Board

Date: November 30, 2012

Subject: Expedited Review of *Using Branching Story to Motivate Students to Read* (HS-4105)

The Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects' Expedited Review Committee has reviewed your proposal to motivate children to read by creating a branching story as an instructional game using multi-media technology and to measure the impact of the intervention.

The Expedited Review Committee has approved your application subject to the conditions noted below; a signed, approved copy of your application is enclosed.

Before you begin:

1. In the third paragraph of the letter asking for parental permission you indicate that if they have questions they should address them either to Dr. Liu or to Ruth Galm. Please change this so that if they have questions about the study itself they should address them either to you or Dr. Liu. They should only contact Ruth Galm if they have questions about their rights as a subject or if they wish to make a complaint. The following sentence about that is required: If you have any concerns about your rights as a participant in this research or any complaints you wish to make, you may contact Ruth Galm, Human Protections Administrator (509-359-7971/6567), email: rgalm@ewu.edu.
2. Would you please send us a copy of the revised letter for our files.

Human subjects research approval granted by the IRB is good for one year from the date of approval, to November 30, 2012. If research is to continue, with no substantial changes, beyond that date, a renewal of IRB approval must be obtained prior to continuation of the project (contact OGRD for procedure). If, subsequent to initial approval, a research protocol requires minor changes, the OGRD should be notified of those changes. Any major departures from the original proposal must be approved by the appropriate review process before the protocol may be altered. A Change of Protocol application must be submitted to the IRB for any substantial change in the protocol. The Director, Grant and Research Development, or the Chair of the IRB will determine whether or not the research must then be resubmitted for approval.

If you have additional questions please contact me at 509-359-7039; fax 509-359-2474; email: skeller@ewu.edu. It would be helpful if you would refer to HS-4105 if there were further correspondence as we file everything under this number. Thank you.

cc: R.Galm
J.Liu
C.Valeo

Department of Geography and Anthropology

MS-52, 103 Isle Hall • Cheney, Washington 99004 • (509) 359-2433 • Spokane – (509) 458-6213
Eastern Washington University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution.

Appendix I

Ministry of Education Approval

الرقم : ١١/٣٣٥.٤٢٨.١
التاريخ : ١٤٣٤/٤/٢٥
المشروعات : إخراج



وزارة التربية والتعليم
Ministry of Education

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التربية والتعليم
تعليم البنات
إدارة التربية والتعليم للبنات بمنطقة الرياض
إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

إفادة

الموضوع: الموافقة على تطبيق استراتيجية تعليمية في مدارس تابعة لإدارة التربية والتعليم بمنطقة الرياض .

اسم الباحثة	حنان فهد الدريب .
الكلية / الجامعة	جامعة شرق واشنطن .
الغرض من الدراسة	" تطبيق إستراتيجية القصة الفرعية في الفصل الدراسي في السعودية "
مجال الدراسة	وسائل الإعلام والتكنولوجيا التعليمية .

سعادة الملحق الثقافي السعودي / بواشنطن

حفظه الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد ،،،

بناءً على تعميم معالي وزير التربية والتعليم رقم ٥٥/٦١٠ وتاريخ ١٤١٦/٩/١٧هـ بشأن تفويض الإدارات العامة للتربية والتعليم بإصدار خطابات السماح للباحثين بإجراء البحوث والدراسات ، وبناءً على تفويض مدير عام إدارة التربية والتعليم بإدارة التخطيط والتطوير ذي الرقم ١١/٣٣٦٧٤٨٢٣ والتاريخ ١٤٣٣/٤/١٤هـ بشأن تسهيل مهام الباحثين والباحثات ، نفيدكم أنه لا مانع من تطبيق الدراسة على نطاق عينة من مدارس تابعة لإدارة التربية والتعليم بمنطقة الرياض ، مع ملاحظة أن الباحثة تتحمل كامل المسؤولية المتعلقة بمختلف جوانب البحث ، ولا يعني سماح الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم موافقتها بالضرورة على مشكلة البحث أو على الطرق والأساليب المستخدمة في دراستها ومعالجتها ، وبناءً على طلبها تم منحها الإفادة .

شاكرين طيب تعاونكم .

مدير إدارة التخطيط والتطوير



وضحاء بنت سعد الشريف



١٩٤٤

• ص / قسم الدراسات والبحوث .

نموذج (١/٤)

رقم الفاكس / الهاتف (٤٠٢٧٠٥٨)

planingm@rge. Gov. sa

Al-takhteet@hotmail.com

البريد الإلكتروني

Appendix J

Ministry of Education Letter of the Experiment Completion

الرقم : ١١/ ٢٤٢٧٩٨٤٤
التاريخ : ٩/٢٥/١٤٣٥ هـ
المشروعات :



المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التربية والتعليم
الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم بمنطقة الرياض
إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

(إفادة)

الموضوع: انتهاء مهمة باحثة (مرحلة علمية)

اسم الباحثة	حنان فهد الدريب.
الكلية / الجامعة	جامعة شرق واشنطن.
الغرض من الدراسة	متطلب للحصول على درجة / الماجستير.
عنوان الدراسة	(تطبيق استراتيجية القصة الفرعية في الفصل الدراسي في السعودية)

حفظه الله

سعادة الملحق الثقافي السعودي/ واشنطن

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد ،،،

بناءً على تعميم معالي وزير التربية والتعليم رقم ٥٥/٦١٠ وتاريخ ١٤١٦/٩/١٧هـ بشأن تفويض الإدارات العامة للتربية والتعليم بإصدار خطابات السماح للباحثين بإجراء البحوث والدراسات، وحيث تقدمت إلينا الباحثة (الموضحة بياناتها أعلاه) بطلب إجراء دراستها ، والتي بدأت من تاريخ تسهيل المهمة في ١٤٢٤/١/٢٧هـ الصادر من إدارة التخطيط والتطوير وحتى تاريخ ١٤٢٤/٢/١٧هـ، وعليه نفيدكم ان الباحثة قد أنهت كافة إجراءات الدراسة وتطبيق الأداة في مجال البحث لمدارس في المرحلة الابتدائية تابعة لإدارة التربية والتعليم في منطقة الرياض التعليمية ، وبناءً على طلبها تم منحها الإفادة .

شاكرين طيب تعاونكم

مدير إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

وضحاء بنت سعد الشريف



١٤٣٥

نموذج (١)

ص / قسم الدراسات والبحوث

VITA

Author: Hanan F. Aldurayb

Place of Birth: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Undergraduate School Attended: Imam Mohammed Bin Saud Islamic University

Degrees Awards: Bachelor of English Literature, 2008

Imam Mohammed Bin Saud Islamic University

Honors and Awards: King Abdullah scholarship program, 2010

Professional Experiences: Teaching English at elementary, intermediate and
high schools in Saudi Arabia, 2009-2010